

T H E
Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace:

Or, A F E W

English Notes

On a Book lately publish'd by

Mr NICHOLLS,

an Independant Teacher,

INTITLED,

The Method of Divine Grace

IN THE

Salvation of Fallen MAN.

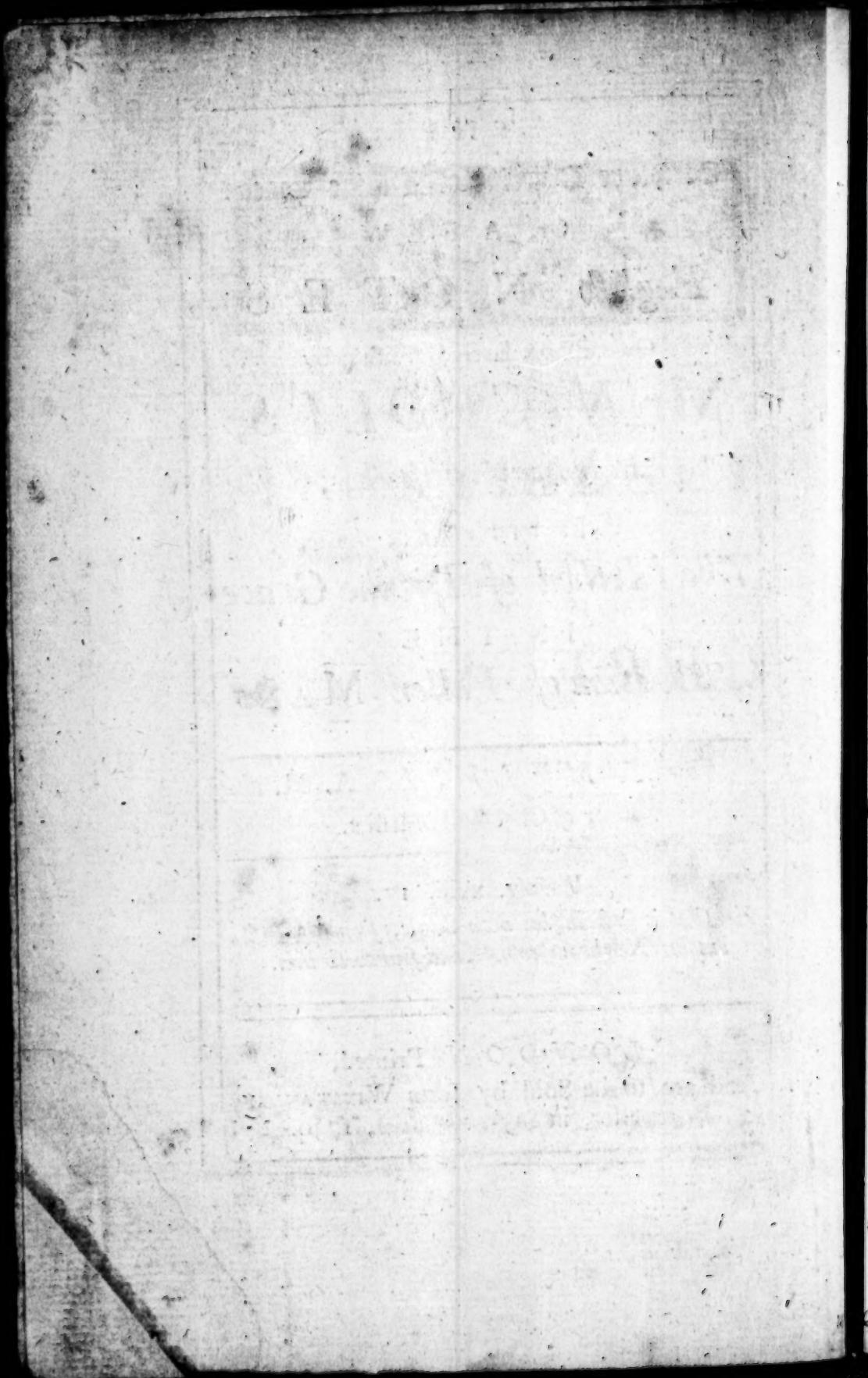
By *T. MELVILLE, A. M.*

Vicar of Cheshall in Essex.

PROV. xviii. 17.

*He that is first in his own Cause, seemeth Just;
but his Neighbour cometh and searcheth him.*

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TO THE
INHABITANTS

Of the PARISH of

CHRESHALL,

Especially those of the Separation.

Dear Brethren and Neighbours,

THE Relation I now bear to you, makes it my Duty to address my self on this Occasion, both to the sound and to the stray part of you my Flock. To you, my Brethren, in the Communion of the Church, in the first place, that you be not carried about with every Wind of Doctrine by the Slight of Men; you have the happiness to live in a Church that adheres to, and contends for, the Faith once delivered to the Saints, and hath preserv'd the

*Unity of Government by a Succession of Bishops in
the Apostolick Line : You are under a Ministry
regular and lawful ; and for your assistance in the
Duties of Religion, there are no means wanting.
You have a pure Form of Worship, where all
Virtues are inculcated into our Minds, all Graces
are prayed for, and our very Prayers are instru-
ctive, where the Word of God is read for our
Information, and explained for our Use. Here we
may certainly be saved, but then we must work
out our Salvation with fear and trembling.
And therefore, as one well observes, if these terms
will not satisfy us, we may go to other Churches,
where we shall be promis'd better, and fare worse :
And after we have flatter'd ourselves with a little
groundless Confidence, it will end in the Character
of Ephraim, he feedeth on Wind*. But I
hope in God, you will give no heed to Seducers,
and never suffer your selves to be decoyed, on any
account, into the Tents of Schism.*

*To you, my Brethren, of the Separation, in
the next place, I address my self ; 'tis for your
sakes chiefly that I have drawn up the following
Remarks. Had our good Neighbour, Mr. Nicholls,
and as he calls himself your Pastor, or at least to
some of you, confined his Doctrine within the
Walls of his Meeting-House, he might have preach-
ed on without any publick notice taken of it by me ;
but having commenced Author in the Evening of
his Age, in order to imprint and fix deeper in your
Minds, some, as he apprehends, Gospel Truths ;
but which are really unscriptural, yea anti-
scriptural Notions ; he takes upon him to scare you
from returning to the Communion of the Church,*

* Hos. xii. 1.

according

according to your bound Duty, upon Peril of your eternal Salvation. Yea, he is so fearful of this, that your Children must not be bestowed out of the Congregational way, because this would lay them under Temptation early to turn Apostates from God's ways ; which very Caution savours a little of what he reckons Arminianism : For there is no Fear of their turning Apostates if they are in the Decree of Absolute Election, if not, marry them to whom you will, you cannot help it. No doubt, by God's ways, Mr. N. means the Congregational way ; and yet there is not any thing by which you divide and distinguish your selves from the Church of England, that can so much as pretend to the least Footsteps in the word of God. Let your supposed Pastor undertake, if he can, the proof of his Mission, and not trouble you with his Foundation Points, that none of you (except one) are capable of understanding, or able to fathom. They may amuse you, and Mr. N. might have taken this Liberty with you, as much, and as long as he pleased, provided he had not laid out his Talent to the disturbance of his Neighbours.

I dare say, the good Man did his best, and where it is not to be bad, it must be forgiven. If any one, who is a perfect Stranger to Academical and Liberal Education, will venture out of his Road, to lay hold of Metaphysics, they commonly prove edge Tools in his hand, and cut the Man who knows not how to use them. As a Neighbour, I do respect Mr. N. but as a Sower of Tares, in a Parish under my Care, the lawfull Shepherd can't in Duty bear with this ; but thinks himself obliged to give warning, and remonstrate against it. And tho' Mr. N. says he intends

tends no Reply; yet he must not imagine to give
the blow, and then make off without Discovery:
Neither ought he, according to his own Doctrine,
to take it amiss, that Remarks are by me made
upon his Book. For if from all Eternity he was
fore-ordained to write it, so was I to answer it;
and accordingly neither of us can be blamed, hav-
ing no Freedom of Will, to do otherwise.

I am told, that one of the chiefeſt Arts your
Leaders make uſe of, to keep their People fast to
their Communion is firſt their new invented Coven-
ant, which would prove as uſeless as it is un-
scriptural, if all the ſtray Sheep folded with it
were returned to their Lawful and Proper Shep-
herds; for every congregational Church in the
Kingdom would then quickly become Invisible. 2dly,
To bar up the Minds of their People againſt all
ways of being undeceived, and if they do but light
upon a Book that reſects upon their new Schemes,
it is immediately wretſted out of their bands, and
they are frighted from peruſing of it. If Mr. N.
doth ſo by you, he may fairly ſhake hands with
the Papifts. But I hope you will be ſo hardy
as notwithstanding his frightful Tales, either from
the Pulpit, or elſewhere, to examine and judge
impartially what I have charitably undertaken
for your ſakes: But if any of you, be under the
absolute Decree of Obſtinacy, I can't help it,
you muſt remain where you are. The Meeting being
the only Hospital, I know of, for ſuch Incurables.

But permit me, my Brethren, to have ſome pity
and compassion upon your deplorable Caſe, and do
not reckon your lawful Pastor your Enemy, be-
cause he tells you the Truth. Your Leaders run
before they are ſent, and ſuch have no lawful Call
to the Congregation, Ordinary or Extraordinary,
who

who have only a pretended Relation to the Flock, whose own the Sheep are not. Neither can you ever get over the Difficulty of making your own Teachers, 'tis impossible to reconcile the Practice to Scripture; all the Texts, upon the pretended Strength of which your Leaders are above Measure assuming, do rather make against, than for it. The Independant Church-way agreeeth neither to Scripture, to Antiquity, nor to Reason, and therefore is none of God's way. These, you will say, are but bare Assertions: They are no more at present; but when ever your Plea to the contrary is produced, I think I can turn them into Demonstrations. Can you be the Friends of Christ? and not do that which he commands. And yet the Lord's Prayer is not used, so far as I can learn in any of your Congregations. Can you reject Forms of Prayer in the publick Worship of God, and yet take up with your Preacher's Prayer, which to you is unavoidably a Form, and you must follow him, whatever he says. And is it more reasonable to take up with his Form, than with the well digested Forms of the Church: dare you presume to take the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from, and suffer your Children to be baptized by Persons, who were never empowered with God's Commission to perform it. By doing so, call to mind, that the Time is now come that Men will not endure sound Doctrine, heaping to themselves Teachers having itching ears †.

I am persuaded that the Truth I would promote in the following Remarks would go a great way to clear Christianity from the Contempt thrown upon it, by our modern Infidels, who with a most

* John x. 12,

† 2 Tim. iv. 3.

daring Impudence are endeavouring to sap the very Foundations of our Christian Faith; and persuade Men to reject the Gospel. Mr. N's Time, and mine would be better employed against the Attacks of Infidelity, than in discussing what he calls Foundation Points, which are only Problematical Propositions, which ought to be confined to the Schools. He has I own drawn me into the Combat, by publishing his Principles and dispersing them in a place under my Care. And 'twas not Choice, but Duty engaged me in it.

If there be any seeming Severity in my Remarks, I declare I did not thereby design to expose the Author, but the Argument. But this I must, now that it is made publick, submit to the Reader, to be Candid or Glamorous, as either Fancy or Prejudice will incline him. My Heart's desire is to perswade Japhet to dwell in the Tents of Sem. And therefore * I beseech you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Schisms amongst you, that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment. And I humbly beseech Almighty God to heal all our Divisions. So pray, without ceasing,

* 1 Cor. i. 10.

Dear Brethren and Neighbours,
Your Lawful Pastor,

And Faithful Servant in Christ,

T. MELVIL.



THE INTRODUCTION

C O N S I D E R A T I O N

THO' the word *Grace* properly signifies *Favour*, *Mercy*, and *Goodness*, in a *sovereign*, or *superior*, remitting somewhat of his *own right*, or conferring somewhat beneficial upon others, freely and without any obligation of debt; and because this may be done after various manners, and in a great diversity of instances, hence, says a learned *Divine*, the word *Grace* in scripture is accordingly applied in a proportionable diversity of significations; yet Mr. *Nicholls*, intending to treat of *Divine Grace*, sets out with a plain begging of the question, *The spring of salvation, by absolute grace, cannot be yet* (says he) *found anywhere short of an eternal act of God's sovereign will: Salvation to sinners*

sinners purely by grace, must flow from that spring in the eternal election of its objects. Here, with this unscriptural term *absolute*, our author appears to be in the *Supralapsarian* scheme, which supposeth an eternal decree of God to have passed, without considering man as fallen, or so much as created : Those named *Sublapsarians* don't go so high, they consider all mankind as lost in *Adam*, and in that they make the decree of election to begin. The horror of both schemes is exceeding shocking, and they are both liable to the same difficulties ; opposite to the clearest ideas that can rationally be formed of the nature of God ; contrary to the design of *all revelation*, and to express testimonies of *scripture*, which the reader may plainly perceive in the following remarks. All I am concerned at present with them, is to desire the difference may be remember'd. The consequences of both are the same, tho' the schemes are variously express'd, and from beginning to the end, there seems to be in both a continued chain of absolute decrees.

By *absolute grace* Mr. N. means an *irresistible grace* ; a grace so *efficacious*, that it *conquers* wherever it comes, and never fails of *converting* those to whom it is given ; and the reader is to take it for granted, that the *free grace* of God is of such a nature, and denotes some *supernatural* and *infused habits*, or some *christian virtues*, which in *scripture* are never stiled *grace*, but the *fruits of the Spirit* ; as Gal. v. 22. Epb. v. 9. But if People must believe it to be *absolute grace only* upon his bare *say-so*, doth not this smell rank of *Po-pery*? doth it not look like *implicit faith*? Indeed, if it was God's will to deal with his people after this fashion, certainly St. Paul must have known of it ; and if he did, no account can be

be given, why he should make use of such an exhortation to the Corintbians, *We then as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain,* 2 Cor. vi. 1. For absolute or irresistible grace can never be received in vain; it being the necessary effect of a distinct power, and supposes men to be purely passive, like so many machines: It is more than probable, that ordinarily there is no such thing, that the grace of God only awakens and disposes, as well as enables men to turn to God, but that it may be resisted, otherwise why are we required *not to grieve the Spirit?* why is it said, *ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye: how often would I have gathered you under my wings, but ye would not? what more * could I have done to my vineyard, that has not been done in it?*^a Certainly God could have done much more, if it had been his fixed will to make use of irresistible grace.

This being premised, I come now to the various senses under which he says the word *Election* falls: 1st, *It may be taken*, says Mr. N. for the assuming of persons into some special office; for Saul was elected king, and Judas to be an apostle. But there is somewhat more in Judas's case than Mr. N. is aware of; for he was not only chosen by Christ to be an apostle with the rest, but he was given by God the Father to Christ with the rest: he was therefore in God's decree of election as much as any of the other apostles, and yet he was lost. For Christ praying to his Father saith, *those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of*

* *Heb.* What was there more to do?
Matt. xxiii. 37. If. v. 4.

^a Acts viii. 51.

them is lost but the son of perdition^b: that is, worthy of perdition, whom God permitted to be lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled, viz. Psal. cix. 8. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. But he was not lost, nor the scripture fulfilled, by virtue of any absolute and inevitable decree: the determinate council of God^c laid not Judas under a necessity of sinning; for then it must remove the sin, because it took away the freedom of the action, and render'd it not Judas's, but his that laid upon him the unavoidable necessity of doing it; and if a Judas was not, as I am well assured from the word of God, then none are, efficaciously determined to sin.

2dly, Mr. N. says it is taken for separating a people to some special external privileges; so the Jews were an elect nation. They were so indeed, but was it only with respect to some special external privileges? my Bible tells me, that it importeth likewise their being chosen to the enjoyment, and put in a capacity of obtaining all the blessings also, which God had promised to them his church and people, and in this, and no other sense, it is applied to christians in the New Testament: hence, by the elect lady, and the elect sister, is meant the christian lady and sister^d: For the elect's sake, that is the christians sake^e; and as amongst the Jews, the whole nation, good and bad, were the elect of God^f, so under the gospel, all christians, that is, the Holy Catholick Church of Christ, are the elect of God, a chosen (or elect) generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people^g; all which are the

^b John xiii. 12. ^c Acts ii. 23. ^d 2 John v. 1--13.
• Mark xiii. 20. ^e Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8. ^f 1 Pet. ii. 9.

very titles given to the whole Jewish nation in the Old Testament; of whom it cannot be said, that they were all saved, neither could St. Peter affirm of all the christians he writes to, without a revelation that they were all *elect*, according to this author's sense of election: And I challenge him, or any Calvinist, to name me one single text in the whole Bible, without wresting it, for his sense of the word. Is it not then strange, that after all the noise they make about it, and tho' it be the *whole* of their cause, yet they are not able to prove their notion of election from the *word of God*. A *conditional election* upon our perseverance in a life of holiness, is a scripture doctrine; but of *absolute election*, that is, that the *elect* imports men absolutely designed for eternal happiness, I do repeat it, there is not one word in all the scripture; and yet on this single point is the schism supported, and on *this* some buoy themselves up with the certainty of being saved.

3dly, *It is taken*, says Mr. N. for a timely effect of love in vocation, John xv. 19. The world hated them for their nonconformity, not for a secret decree. At this rate it may be taken for a timely effect of any thing; I shall therefore take no advantage of the manner and deep sense of the expression, it being, no doubt, designed to please those who fancy there is mystery and secret sense in every phrase, they understand not. But I cannot conceive, how these words, *the world hated them*, come to be any proof of this; by what logical consequence doth it follow? Therefore election is taken for a timely effect of love in vocation. I can't help thinking, that O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth

truth^b, is as good a proof of its being taken
for a timely effect of **Departure** from **vocation**.

The world hated them (says Mr. N.) for their *nonconformity*; it did so for their leading a life, and preaching a doctrine opposite to the vices of it, and so it did their Lord and Master; but his *nonconformity* never kept him from church: I agree with our author, that it was not *for a secret decree*. For the Jews, like some now a-days firmly believed, that none, besides themselves, and their proselytes, were in the decree of electionⁱ. And all that a St. Paul could say, for the *Gentiles* share in it, could never beat them out of that belief. No, they, and they only, were the *little flock*, and all the world besides were but as fuel for hell.

• 4tably, says Mr. N. *The object put for the act by a metonymy*, Rom. xi. 7. The election hath obtained, that is, the persons elected for the *act of election*; is this *truth in a plain dress*? it seems rather to be in a masquerade, for there is more than one figure here. To talk of a *metonymy* to men of *mean capacities*, may make them open their mouths and gape, that being the *timely effect* their ears can produce here; but for their understandings, husbandmen and day-labourers are not half so well acquainted with a *trope* as with the use of a *cart rope*. I confess there is a small figure here besides, very plain, called, in *English*, the *cart before the horses*. For the object is not put for the *act*, nor the persons elected for

^b Gal. v. 1,

ⁱ Thou madest the world for our sakes. As for the other people, which also come of Adam, thou hast said, that they are nothing, but be like unto spittle, and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel. 2 Esdras vi. 55, 56.

the act of election, but the direct contrary. The act for the object, and election for the persons elected. Neither can the word *election* here, import men under an absolute certainty of, or absolutely designed for *eternal happiness*; because some of the *persons elected*, St. Paul cautions, to beware of backsliding from *Christianity* to *Judaism*; looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace (in the original fall from the grace) of God^{*}. Yea, he tells them, ver. 22. of the chapter referr'd, *behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off!*¹. But why are they thus advised? if in the absolute decree of election, or if the true branches can never be cut off.

5tly, and lastly, And what Mr. N. intends, it signifies, says he, *the secret purpose of God's fixed will, to be gracious to whom he pleased*, Rom. ix. 2. *that the purpose of God according to election might stand*. I desire this author, and I think it is a modest request, to allow me this postulate, 'tis no harder word than *substrate*: that God's secret and revealed will are one, and indeed it is nonsensical and blasphemous to suppose that they are not. Then I am sure there are no such absolute decrees as he contends for; seeing, according to God's revealed will, 1 Tim. ii. 4. and in innumerable other places, *he would have all men to be saved*. So that we must disbelieve the scriptures, or reject absolute decrees, *which we will abuse*, as he expresses it, p. 13.

* Heb. xii. 15.

¹ Rom. xi. 22.

To be gracious to whom he pleased, is indeed God's property; because it belongs to him to appoint, upon what terms he will be gracious, and justify men, by the law of faith, or by works; and therefore if upon the infidelity of the Jews, he will call the *idolatrous Gentiles*, and receive them to be his people, as he did the Jews again, after their idolatry, *Exod. xxxiii. 19.* who can accuse him of injustice on that account? In distributing *mercies* which have no foundation in merit; he need give no account or reason of it, but his will; it being *not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*, *Rom. ix. 16*; it depends merely upon the divine goodness, and therefore we must seek it according to his pleasure, in such ways as he appoints, and not in those which seem to us most proper to obtain it. The great mistake of our author, and all of his principles, is this, they will have St. Paul, from *Rom. ix.* to speak of God's dealings with mankind, as to their final and eternal state; whereas the design of that chapter is to justify God's dealing, as in his providence he actually had done with the unbelieving Jews and the believing *Gentiles*. As to eternal happiness, we are sure it is his *fixed will* to be gracious to the whole world. For so our Saviour expressly tells us, that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*^a. And if so, then the doctrine which asserts the *salvability* only of a *select few*, is demonstratively false.

That the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, is, it seems, the main foundation for

^a John iii. 16.

absolute election. A foundation not capable of bearing the weight they lay upon it: Because the *election* here mentioned, is meant chiefly concerning things *temporal*, not things *eternal*. Besides, it is not a personal, but a national, *election*. For as to the persons of *Esau* and *Jacob*, this was never true, that *the elder did serve the younger*, but only as to their posterity; when the *Edomites* became tributaries to *David*, 2 Sam. iii. 14. Therefore by *election* here, cannot be meant any personal election of them to eternal life; seeing it manifestly speaks of the whole nation of *Israel*, who must, according to Mr. N's opinion, be all elected to eternal life; which is contrary to the whole Jewish history.

But Mr. N. not content to impose his sense of *election* upon the reader, must needs impose it upon the *Church* too. For with an amazing assurance, he tells us, *in no other sense can the 17th article of the Church of England be understood*. It is unfortunate for a man to be so positive in clear and plain things. The *article* is point blank against his intended sense of the word. For whatever pretence the *Sublapsarians* may make to the Article: "It supposes (as bishop Burnet on "the article observes) men to be under a curse "and damnation, antecedently to *Predestination*, "from which they are delivered by it; so it is "directly against the *Supralapsarian* (which is "our author's) doctrine.

And by those *Articles*, says Mr. N., and the worthy labours of the *Reformers* yet extant, the *Church* of England may see whereabouts she now standeth. Yes, Sir, she may, and does see, that she still standeth (to imitate one of your own phrases) upon her reformation-bottom. If by *Reformers* he means the refugees from *Geneva* in Queen

Elizabeth's days, they indeed began to propagate Calvinism pretty early. But it does not appear (says the learned Dr. Waterland^o) that they then claim'd any countenance for it, from our articles; which still continued the same in those points, after the revision in 1562, and again in 1571.—Our articles therefore in their original composition were not Calvinistical: How they could come (says he) to be so afterwards, being still the same articles, I cannot devise; and he proves, that they were not drawn up by Calvin's scheme, but according to scripture and antiquity, and from other writings.

It may by some (says Mr. N.) be wonder'd at, that these articles are not new moulded. And so it was by some long ago; but those some, were of his principles, Calvinists, who, in the year 1572, loudly complain'd of the articles. The authors of the second admonition, as Plaifere^p observes, do accuse some bishops as suspected of the heresy of Pelagius, and say, for free-will, not only they are suspected, but others also: and indeed the book of articles of Christian Religion speaketh very dangerously of falling away from grace, which is to be reformed, because it too much inclineth to their error. What do you think of this Mr. N. your bolt recoils? There's no pleasing of some men. The old Calvinists thought the articles spoke very dangerously against them, and therefore wanted them to be new moulded long before, and even after the restauration^q. But the modern Calvi-

^o Supplement to Arr. Subscript. p. 52.

^p Apello Evang. part. 3. chap. 10.

^q See bishop Pearson's No necessity of reforming the doctrine of the Church of England, and his answer to Dr. Burges: printed by J. G. for Nathaniel Brook, at the Angel in Cornhill, 1660.

nists boast of the articles being clear on their side ; yea, so very clear, that they wonder the church doth not *new-mould* them. And yet the articles are still the same, and the doctrines of *universal redemption*, and of *departing from grace*, which the *old* were sensible bore hard upon their scheme ; the present Calvinists without scruple subscribe, tho' one would wonder how they can make them agree with *absolute decrees*.

By this, Mr. N. may see, that *all the Dissenters* are in no danger of being *alarm'd* too much, as he says they *would*. If there were any need for *new moulding*, does he take all the Dissenters to be Calvinists ? have not some of the most knowing given proof of the contrary, or does he believe that the united force of all the Dissenters are, notwithstanding forty years toleration, such a formidable body as to scare the Church, when they are displeased. God be thanked, they are not come to that yet, and I hope never will.

Thus having made my way through his Introduction, with the sting in the tail of it ; so many blunders in a page-and-a-half were very discouraging : But a hearty desire to undeceive well *meaning*, but strangely *misguided*, people, prompted me to proceed ; and so I pass on to

C H A P. I.

Of ELECTION.

"**E**lection, says he, is an eternal act of God's sovereign Will, fixing thereby in Christ (a supernatural head) a certain number (foreknown to himself) of angels and mankind, Epb. iii. 10, 11." — The manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here is a false proposition laid down for the foundation of a doctrine, false in every branch of it; for which I do not blame the author, but those who first advanced it, and the Westminster Assemblies Confession of Faith, from whence he learnt it. *Election*, says he, is an eternal act of God's sovereign Will; and for the proof of this, he refers us to the words according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. But here he labours under a mistake, and trusts more to the sound, than the sense of the text; for any one capable may easily see, that either he would not, or could not consult the original, what our translation calls, according to the eternal purpose, is in the Greek, which he pretends to know a little, Κατὰ τὸν θεόν τὸν αἰώνων, according to the fore-disposing of the ages in Christ Jesus our Lord. In the first of which, says Dr. Whiby^x, God's wisdom seeing fit to give a promise of a Saviour

^x Paraphrase on Ephes. iii. 11.

to fall'n *Adam*, in the second age, to typifie and represent him to the Jews in sacred persons, rites, and sacrifices; and, in the age of the Messiah, or the last age, to reveal him to the Jews, and preach him to the Gentiles. *God's purpose in Christ Jesus was (as all things in him) from all eternity;* but the *election* was to be in time, not to absolute grace, for that is no where promised, but to the means of grace, which puts all who believe in Christ, and obey the gospel, in a capacity, not an absolute assurance, of their salvation: They who stand fairest for it, must take heed lest they fall; and as many as are, or were, fitly disposed, or in readiness for, or to, eternal life, are said to be ordained to it*. This indeed ignorant people take to import a fixed number of persons, absolutely by God ordained to eternal life, according to what they hear at the *Meeting*, and think this a good proof of it; tho' in the original it is, *ταῦτα μένον, disposed, not ordained,* in their sense of the word; and those who were not well disposed are said not to be chosen. *Many are called, but few are chosen:* they are called, but not elected, as not hearkening to God's Call, whence *Theophylact* infers^t, that *our calling is of God; but that we are elect* *, or not, *is from our selves.* But,

Mr. N. speaking of Election as an eternal act of God's Sovereign Will, adds, p. 13. *Justice or Injustice have no concern here; that respects God as a Judge, but this as a Sovereign; and we must allow sovereignty to be God's absolute right, or else we must deny him to be Creator, which we will chuse.* I confess here I dropt my pen, and gave vent to my thoughts, in the words of the learned Bishop

* *Acts* xiii. 48. ^t Τέ τούς θεούς τὸ καλέν τὸ δὲ ἐκλεκτοὺς γένεδος οὐ μὴ ἡμίτελεν εἰσι. *Theophylact.* in loc.
i. e. Christians.

of St. Asaph^u, Hear O heavens! and give ear O earth! was ever misrepresentation like this? a charge more false, more groundless, more absurd, (I had almost added, more blasphemous) never was, never can be made! Is it for this, thought I, that *Dissenters* trudge through so much dirt to a *Meeting*? what! does not *Justice respect God as a Sovereign*? To repeat this, is to expose it; for to a reader of the lowest size of understanding, the horror with which this doctrine should affect him, if a serious christian, might supersede the use of any farther arguments against it; and however such exalted notions of the *absolute sovereignty and free grace of God* may please some, I dare not blaspheme one of God's attributes, by thus complimenting another: For tho' he most certainly be Lord of all his creatures, yet must the exercise of his *Dominion* be directed by his *Justice*, which is a perfection as essential to his *nature* as the other. Nay we are infallibly assured from the revelation he has been pleased to make of his Will, that he does not proceed with men as their *Sovereign*, tho' such he be, but rather acts in the quality of a *judge*; seeing he has proposed to them laws, according to which he will pass sentence at the last day^x.

I do not very well understand what Mr. N. means by *fixing thereby in Christ* (a *supernatural head*) a certain number (*foreknown to himself*) of *angels and of mankind*. For not to insist that God foreknows nothing, because all things are present to him. I cannot conceive what *relation Angels have to Christ, as a supernatural Head*: he did not take upon him the *nature of Angels*, but the *seed of Abraham*^y; and the Nature that was not assumed was

^u Script. Vindic. p. 133.
^x Heb. ii. 26.

^y Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

was not ransomed: Christ was none of their *Goel, Kinsman, or Redeemer.* It is true indeed, that of the *Angels* some are said to be *elected*, 1 Tim, v. 21. but it is equally true, that the word is not taken there in our author's sense of it. The bad Angels were fallen from, and the good Angels in a confirmed state of happiness, before the promise of a *Messiah* was made; they are therefore called *elected*, or *holy*, only by way of excellency, to distinguish them from the *apostate angels*.

I profess likewise I do much less understand, how, *out of the race of mankind, God elected some in Christ a supernatural head, and this left the rest as pure creatures, upon creation-bottom only, and that hereby no wrong was done to them.* I know not what he means by *creation-bottom only*, but I think every man of common understanding must conclude with me, that there was great *wrong done to them*, if the rest were left on creation-bottom, or what bottom Mr. N. pleases, infallibly to be *damned*. And indeed there is no medium, *absolute election* necessarily infers *absolute reprobation*; and our author believes as much, tho' he durst not speak out here, but shuffles it off with *creation-bottom*. Now since we are well-assured, that *God's tender mercies are over all his creatures*, how can this consist with his electing and fixing only *some in Christ*, by an *eternal, absolute, infallible decree*. Does Mr. N. think it is sufficient to put all this off, with a *shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made thee thus?* Rom. ix. 20. for the Apostle speaks this with regard to God's dispensations and *providence* here, not in respect of our *final and eternal state hereafter*; in making us vessels of honour and dishonour in this world, there is *no wrong done to any of God's creatures by him*
their

their *Creator*. When we take the case in this view, well may the apostle say, *Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* But as to *eternal salvation*, the case of God's rational creatures, upon *creation-bottom*, would be very hard indeed, if it were no better than this author represents it, especially seeing our *election* follows upon, but does not precede, our *faith*. May I therefore put the question? Is man the author of his own misery, or is he not? I think 'tis fairly stated: if he is the author of his own misery, then there is no such *mystery*, nor *absolute decree* in the case: if he is not, is there not great *wrong done to him*, to blame him, nay to *damn him*, for what he could no ways help? How can this, without the most horrid blasphemy, be charged upon the *Father of Mercies, and the God of all Truth*; that he should offer life and salvation to them whom he has doomed to damnation; at least to those whom he has *left upon creation-bottom*, and determined not to save. Nay what makes the procedure still more cruel is, that this author and those of his principles suppose, that the sentence to eternal death, was for their being incorrigible rebels before they were born, or such as were necessarily to become rebels, that they might be damned. But I am so much shocked, and I believe so is the reader too, with this doctrine, that I shall not pursue it in its other pernicious consequences.

As to the *certain number of angels, and of mankind fixed thereby in Christ*: If we may judge of the number of the good and confirmed angels, (who, by the bye, were of no kin to Christ) by the number of the bad and fallen angels, one of whom

whom was called *Legion*, a name of multitude², the number seems rather to be indefinite than certain; and if we may judge of the number of mankind concerned in the death of Christ from the word of God, this pretended certain number is no less than all men: For, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all to justification of life³. The all of the one side (says Bishop Burnet on the xviith Article) must be of the same extent with the all of the other: so since all are concerned in Adam's sin, all must be likewise concerned in the death of Christ, and consequently a certain number are not fixed in Christ (a supernatural head),

The moving cause of this election, says Mr. N. flows from the sovereign pleasure of his good-will, Ephes. i. 5. I grant it as to election in the scripture sense; not in his. The final cause, says he, was the manifestation of his glorious grace in the eternal salvation of his elect. This I grant likewise, in the scripture sense of the word. The subject, says he, in whom elected is Christ, Epb. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world. "This text of holy scripture, says Mr. N. will stand its ground against all opposition whatever, and against all the most subtle evasions of learned sophisters." Ay, so it will; but not upon Creation-bottom: it can never stand upon this ground. Does he think the us here to be those only that go to a Meeting, (as some ignorant People are made to believe) or a select few?

² Mark v. 9.

³ Rom. v. 18.

D

will

will he take St. Paul's word for it? if so, I assure him the *us* was all the Gentiles, as well the Jews, *that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*^b. Now dare Mr. N. say, that all the *elected*; i. e. converted Jews and Gentiles, were infallibly saved: If not, here's a demonstration, that even the *elected* may finally perish: and now I'll give him leave to call me *Heretick*, for attempting to overturn his sense of the sacred Truth revealed herein. For I confess unto Mr. N. that, with St. Paul, *after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers*^c. The Apostle, to take from the Jews all cause of boasting, declares, that the Gentiles also were elected in Christ Jesus, even before the foundations of the world; i. e. that God designed then to chuse them to be his Church and People; and in this sense, and no other, is this text *built on the rock of ages*,

God has proposed no other means to secure his *Elect* from the loss of eternal happiness, p. 15, but faith and obedience to the gospel; not a bare naked faith; for this alone will never carry any man to heaven. To hear some talk of Faith: Faith! oh! get Faith! any one would conclude, that the doctrine taught them is, that the kingdom of heaven may be taken, without any force, save that of a bare belief; tho' the Apostle has in express words said, *What doth it profit my brethren, tho' a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him*^d? God has denied to none his grace given in Christ as

^b Ephes. iii. 6. ^c Acts xxiv. 14. ^d Jam. ii. 14.

head; because the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, if we do what it teacheth us; that is, That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. These things we are enjoined to speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.

In obedience to which, as his proper Pastor, whilst he resides in the parish, I must rebuke this author for saying, p. 17. *That any are saved, must flow from the sovereign Will of God, or from the power, and at the liberty of the sinners Will.* Pray what should hinder it to flow from both, through the merits of Christ Jesus? What sense then can there be in his adding, *there can be no medium; it must be from sovereign grace according to election, Rom. xi. 5. or from works according to man's free will.* The viciousness of this *dilemma* proceeds from a defect that hinders its being conclusive; for the particular conclusion of each part is not necessary; It is not necessary; nay, it is false to believe, that God does all, without any thing done on our part, to save us; or that we can do any thing towards our salvation, without the assistance of God's free (but not absolute) grace, altho' there were many who received this grace in vain. 'Tis an observation in *Logick*, that he who makes use of a

* Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Dilemma, ought to take care that his argument be not turned upon himself. The *sovereign will of God* in the salvation of sinners does *all*, or it does not: if *all*, why were not those of *Jerusalem gathered together*^f? if not *all*, it is at the liberty of the sinners Will to fly to God's Mercy, and be saved. These words, according to the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. refer to the Gospel Election of Persons and Nations to be the Church and People of God; which being, says a learned Commentator *, purely on the account of that Faith, which is the gift of God, without consideration of any other worthiness that we had, or any works that we had done, is styled the **Election of Grace**; and thus a remnant only of the Jews were chosen, verse 7. for many of them were called, by the preaching of the Gospel to the Faith, it being preached to them first, Acts xiii. 45. but few were chosen to be Members of the **Church of Christ**, because few of them believed.

And now he may see that I speak plainly, and don't deceive any by the abuse of the term *Grace*: The Grace I mean, is an operating, but not an *irresistible Grace*: It depends so far on *Man's free Will*, that it may be resisted; and was actually resisted by the Jews, and is still resisted by too many Christians, who resist the *Truth*^g. Yea, our blessed Lord and Saviour charges the Jews, with a *Ye shall not come to me, that ye might have life*^h. What think you, Mr. N. was it not at the liberty of

^f Matt. xxiii. 37.

^g Dr. Whiby.

^h 2 Tim. iii. 8.

^h John v. 40.

the sinners Will here, to be saved? Sovereign Grace, according to Election, you see, tho' it is suppos'd to work irresistibly in those who go to the Meeting, as you tell them, yet it may be resisted; therefore it must be a great mistake in you, or them, to imagine, that Divine Grace operates like a Potion, that works whether we will or no: I have set down a chain of Scripture evidences † to the contrary, so plain and forcible, as cannot fail to establish every unprejudic'd Mind in a firm Belief, that the Grace of God doth not work physically, or by irresistible force.

But, says Mr. N. this is a *Compound*, and *confounds and destroys the very nature of both, and so is neither Grace nor Works.* No; it is neither irresistible Grace, nor meritorious Works; it is a Grace that enables, not forces us, to *work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling:* here's the Compound. It is God indeed *that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure:* not by any *physical*, but *moral operation;* for, as we cannot work, where we are wholly passive, so neither would there be any cause of *fear and trembling*, lest that *Salvation* should not be *wrought out*, which God *works irresistibly;* and the Apostle's Exhortation would be absurd, if he exhorted another to do himself, what God doth for him without his concurrence.

Mr. N. however, will have it, that this is neither *Grace* nor *Works;* and that this overthrows the *Apostle's argument*, Rom. xi. 6. and if by

† Pag. 2.

Grace,

Grace, then is it no more of works: * otherwise Grace is no more Grace: But if it be of Works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise Work is no more Work. Here our Author seems to triumph; not knowing, that the famous *Alexandrian Manuscript*, in the King's Library, omits, from this Mark *, all the rest, to the end of the Verse; and so doth, (says the learned *Hammond*) *the ancient Latin Translation*; and *Origen*, *Chrysostom*, and *Ambrose*; and *Dr. Mills*, in his *edition* of the *Greek New Testament*, adds the *Aethiopick*, *Theodoret*, and other MSS. and says, *they were inserted by some Reader, who had a mind to set them down, by way of Antitheatris, to the former part of the Verse*ⁱ. But be this as it will, I must beg *Mr. N.* to reason better, before I can allow his saying, *you must quit one, or you spoil both*; it being far from spoiling the great *Mercy of God in Christ*, to say, that the only Condition requir'd on our part, to make us capable of it, is our embracing of the *Gospel*; not adhering to the *Works* of the *Law*, or imputing any merit to ourselves: for then *Grace* would be *no more Grace*; that is, the *Gospel* were not the *Gospel*: The Glory of it is wholly due to *Christ*; for *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*^k, and by his *Grace* it is that we are saved^l; not of *Works*: We dare not be so bold to

ⁱ Εἰ δὲ ἐπούρ, &c. (ad finem versus) 11. 6. non occurunt apud *Orig.* *vulg.* *Aethiop.* *Ambr.* *Alex.* *Cod.* al. nec agnoscent. *Chrysost.* & *Theodoreetus* in *Commentariis*, Lectoris cuiusdam sunt, qui adnexa voluit, quæ priori parti hujus versus responderent. *Cl. Millii Prolegom.* p. 65. N. 679. *Edit. Kuff. Amstelodami.* 1710.

^k John i. 17.

^l Ephef. ii. 8, 9.

ascribe it wholly to that ; but we think it no boldness to say, we must work it out ; because the *Grace of God* may be received *in vain*, and that good Works are the best evidences of a true Faith.

The *Fall foreseen*, says Mr. N, could be no cause of *Election in Christ as head*. I am not concern'd with this, let his brethren the *Sublapsarians* look to it, we are sure the *promise of the Messiah* was *caused by the fall*, and made upon it. As for *Election*, in his sense of the word, since it is not to be found in *Scripture*, we need not trouble our heads about it. We think it blasphemous, even to suppose God to act directly contrary to the established notion of *Justice*, much more to make it an article of faith. I do conceive the *misery of man to be the motive*, and that therefore it extends to all, because all were alike miserable. This, indeed is not *Dutch divinity*, but 'tis a *Scripture truth*, read *Rom. v. 18.* and avoid, if you can, meeting with strong gripes of conscience.

God's absolute decree of *Election in Christ as head*, is, says Mr. N, so far from *barshness or cruelty*, that it is the *spring from whence flows all real and certain Salvation to sinners*. I can't be drawn into this ; because I am firmly perswaded that this *doctrine* destroys the two great *springs of religion*, viz. The *hopes* which animate men to *virtue*, and the *fears* which restrain them from *vice*. The *Scriptures* promise a reward only to those who *believe and obey* ; and threaten them only with a punishment, who continue in *Infidelity and Impenitence*. But Mr. N's doctrine of *Election* supposes

poses God to admit to Heaven, and dispatch to Hell, without respect to either. If this does not give a man the *gripes*, I know not what doctrine will. Therefore we must either disbelieve the Scripture, or reject *absolute decrees*. As to its being *far from hardness and cruelty*, pray tell me Mr. N. do you think it *no hardness and cruelty* to threaten and inflict eternal punishments upon the infidelity and impenitence of any one man who never had, nay was denied, the power to obey? to my thinking Pharaoh's hardness and cruelty to the Israelites, was nothing in comparison to this. Dr. Hickman in his history of Arminians, tells us, "That it doth not from any principle of the Supralapsarian follow, either that God is the author of sin, or that he is a verier Tyrant than ever lived on earth, though I shall grant, says he, that for man to do as God doth, would be the highest cruelty."

However, Mr. N. declares, if this be not a revealed truth, then salvation to any one sinner must become unavoidably uncertain. But why so, is not God's promise sufficient to secure it? No, because sooth, such grace, and such a general relation pleaded for, that one may fall from and lose it at last, may reach another and another, and so all may, and none are secured thereby to eternal glory. And yet one would think, that the exhortations to perseverance, the encouragements promised upon it, and the severe threatenings in case of Apostacy (which abound in the Scriptures) did evidently suppose the possibility of a fall. This alone suf-

^m Part ii. p. 381,

sufficiently

sufficiently destroys his notion of Election, and the absolute certainty of perseverance. *Angels, says he, not elected and confirmed in Christ as bead fell.* But how he know that the Angels fell, because not elected in Christ ; this is pure imagination, and has no Scripture to support it. For sin, not want of Election, was the cause of their fall. They had at first as much interest in Christ, as bead, as the good Angels ; that is, none at all. Yea, this author allows, p. 20. that *the fallen Angels had no meet Redeemer in their nature, therefore no Gospel-grant of pardon to them.* Pray was not the nature of the good and the bad Angels the same ? 'tis certain it was so before their fall. How, in the name of wonder, came the good Angels to have a *meet Redeemer*, and the *bad*, none, the nature of both being the same ; or did the good change their nature after the others fell ? if they did, (which is strange) yet Christ did not take upon him their nature, and therefore was no more a *meet Redeemer* for them than for the other Angels.

This notwithstanding, our Author goes on to justify his doctrine of Election after a very singular manner, it doth carry, says he, such a bright beam of divine light throughout the holy Scriptures, that were it not for the carnal mind of fallen man—a rational Man in reading the Scriptures, might by the *light of nature* easily take in some convictions, that it is a plainly reveal'd doctrine of Truth. This is very pateticke and popular, but it happens also unluckily, that there is not a syllable of Truth in it ; nor

passage in all the *Bible* without abusing it ; for a *rational man* of the strongest intellectualls to find out *absolute Election*. Tho' he is pleas'd to call this modern *subtilty*, and singular *conceit*, by the name of a *plainly reveal'd doctrine of Truth* : Yea, he thinks it so *bright a beam*, that it may be searcht out by the *light of nature*. Yet others believe, it is not to be found in their *Bibles*, if search'd even with lighted *Candles* °.

Therefore it was too positive to say, *had there been no such Election in Christ as head, there had been no Redemption by Christ, no meet Redeemer, no Gospel grant of pardon* ; because all these depend one upon another, and hang linked together in a chain, *Rom. viii. 29, 30.* They do so, but not in a *chain of absolute decrees*. The *nature and extent of Election*, is not inconsistent with the *nature and extent of Redemption* ; Christ is able to *save to the uttermost all that come to God by him*. For as by the *offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life* ♪. Doth not this shew that there is no *such Election* as Mr. N. contends for. “ Christ, says one, “ must fulfil on his part what appertained “ to the procuring the salvation of *all* ; or “ else the *salve* is not so broad as the *sore* ; “ which yet the Apostle hath been proving “ in the fifth chapter to the *Romans*.” Thus he may see, that it is the *Calvinists*, not those who deny *absolute Election* that *destroy the glad tidings of the true Gospel-peace*, as he calls it.

• Zeph. i. 12.

¶ Heb. vii. 25. Rom. v. 18.

Dissenters, according to the doctrine of *absolute Election*, cannot say with the Angel (who with the heavenly Host celebrated the *birth-day* of *Christ*, which they refuse to do) *Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people*⁴. For a *Saviour* born to save a select few, can never be *tidings of great joy to all*.

It is only, says he, on this foot of Election in Christ, as head, can stand any certain security. But if there be no such *foot of Election*, as I think, I have plainly made it appear, 'tis only grounding a pretended *certain security* upon a false bottom. All the *promises of security* in Scripture are conditional, God considers men as faithful, and as persevering in their faithfulness. When we cease to do good, and learn to do evil, we forfeit, whilst we do evil, all our title to the merits of *Christ*; and God has no were said, that he will save by an *irresistible grace*, the *elect* only, and at the same time deny it to the non-elect. Let him read *Ezek. xviii. 24, 26, 27. chap. xxxiii. ver. 13, 18.* I hope he will then repent of his rashness, in saying p. 21. That *faith is made of none effect, whilst all is made to depend upon precarious uncertain conditions*; are God's conditional promises there recorded, *precarious uncertain conditions?* if there were no more, this is enough to abandon a *doctrine* that has such a tendency to blasphemy, and to wrest Scripture for it, is still worse; for the *faith* that is said to be *made void*, *Rom. iv. 14.* is the *righteousness of faith*, as it is expressly called in the preceeding verse; that is, a *faith* that de-

⁴ Luke ii. 11.

pends upon the condition of performing it, in the evangelical way of new obedience.

*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.*¹ Here are not precarious, uncertain, but most certain, yea, infallible, conditions; and yet none besides Pelagians make all to depend upon them. Others, both know, and affirm, that it depends upon the grace of God, which does not destroy, but perfect our natures. Divine, both preventing and assisting Grace works upon us, suitably to those faculties God hath given us. He begins the work in us, and that encourages our prayers to him for what we want, even to increase our faith; and thankfulness to him for what we enjoy; but he expects that we should comply with it, and that is enough to awaken both our care and diligence; if either of these be wanting, our faith may be made void. Faith puts us in the way, and if we live up to it, in the state of salvation too, it gives a present Right to it: But 'tis by living by, and suitably to, this faith, that we receive the end thereof, which is the salvation of our souls. Let Solifidians attribute all to faith, thereby leaving no necessity for righteousness and good works; we think them so necessary to faith, that it becomes dead without such evidences. For, by works faith is perfected². The meritorious cause of our Justification is indeed the blood of Christ, and faith in him is an indispensable condition required of us. In this consists our absolution from all our former sins, but the final reward of our faith depends upon the consideration of our

¹ Gen. iv. 7. ² James ii. 22.

duty,

duty, repentance, and obedience. This robs no body of rejoicing in hope of eternal glory.

But, says Mr. N. *bere must be some great mistake about the nature of true faith, when the holy Spirit works that true Faith, (which is called the faith of God's Elect, Tit. i. 1.) be in this new Creation-work creating them anew in Christ Jesus, (Ephes. ii. 10.) be so demolisheth the stately old building of old Adam-nature, that the poor soul finds no strength at all to work or perform Law-conditions for life.* Yes, there is a great mistake, but it is on his side, who by the *true nature of faith*, means a faith, as it is separated from the other evangelical *Graces and Virtues*; not as it is opposite to the rites of the Mosaical Law; in which sense we are said to be justified by *faith only*. That was the great Question that gave occasion to St. Paul's writing so fully upon this head. *The faith of God's Elect*, is the faith of Christians in the general, they being all *an elect generation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. and in this sense, our Church faith, the *holy Spirit sanctifieth all the elect people of God*. Creating them (*anew* is not in the text) *in Christ Jesus to good works*, Eph. ii. 10. Our author thought fit to drop *good works*, and put *anew* instead of them.

As to his new coin'd word, *old Adam-nature*, I profess I know not what he means by it. It is neither in my *Bible*, nor in any *Dictionary* that I can find; it seems to be a word pitch'd upon for sound, rather than sense: But whatever it be, *God's Elect*, that is, *Christians*, have not the *stately old building* they derive from. *Old Adam*, by ordinary generation, *demolished before death comes to pull it down*.

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The holy Spirit does supply it with new grace here, and tho' the poor soul cannot work, or perform law-conditions for Life; yet it can ask and have, it can seek and receive, it can knock, and have the gate opened that leads to that eternal Kingdom, which God hath promised by Christ our Lord. And if life eternal be secured in Christ, as head, it is secured to all Christians; because all have the same interest in Christ, as head, and if it be held forth by gospel promises, which are conditional, how came he to call these promises, precarious, uncertain, conditions.

How came he to say, *in this strait the Spirit opens a door of faith, and this soul ventures itself on him, which died for the ungodly* (Rom. iv. 5. and ver. 6.) This, says he, is right believing; but if it be, how comes it, that there is no precept, no promise or example of this right believing in the holy Scripture. The text he wrefts for the rest, is but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly. But is believing on him resting on him? where is it taken in this sense in all the New Testament? a meer belief in Jesus Christ, a bare assent to the gospel revelation is not a right believing; what then, as one expresseth it^t, can be more evident, than that the word Faith in this place, must not be understood in a strict and proper (i. e.) abstracted sense, but as denoting the complex or whole body of Christianity, virtue, i. e. as denoting both faith strictly so called, and that obedience also, to which our faith directs and engages us.

^t See the ingenious Mr. Stebbing's Polemical Tracts in Folio. p. 36. *Of justifying Faith.*

If, says Mr. N. those that deny *Election* do believe their own doctrine to be true, that true believers may fall away and perish at last, then they may fairly shake bands with the Papists, and deny all assurance of salvation attainable here. Now, is Mr. N. so ignorant, not to know, that he himself *shakes bands with the Papists*, as to his *Doctrine* here. Are not the *Dominicans* and *Jansenists*, numerous Bodies of rigid Papists, of the same *Principles* with himself? Those deny that *Election*, in his sense of it, have express *Scripture* for it; that true Believers may fall away and perish at last. Read *Heb.* vi. 5, 6. which is as flat a contradiction to the doctrine of *Perseverance*, as can be conceived in words: *Very uncomfortable doctrine*, says he, to true Believers! Pray is it *uncomfortable doctrine* to be assured, that *Faith and Obedience*^u, and nothing else, will bring us to *Heaven*; or is it because one needs not perform his duty, who is sure of *Heaven* without it, if so, what should hinder him to commit iniquity, whom the most heinous offences cannot damn nor deprive of the Divine Favour? *Comfortable doctrine*, is it not, which thus lodges Christ and *Belial* at once in the same Soul!

But, true believers know Christ's voice from the Pope's, John x. 28. Then, it seems, our author is not a true believer, for his *doctrine* was the *voice* of the very last Pope that reigned, who was a *Dominican*. I beseech you Mr. N. do not so grossly impose upon your deluded followers, who go to the Meeting to get an

^u Psal. iv. 3. *The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.*

absolute assurance of Salvation. If you did it ignorantly, as I charitably believe you did, then rectify the mistake and make it known to those who are but too willing to yield an implicit Faith (true Popery) to every thing you say. But I forbear to press this matter any further upon the author, since it would be, in some sort, like stabbing him on the ground.

Thus have I made my way through this Chapter, almost Paragraph by Paragraph, I have dwelt the longer upon it, and been the more particular in it, because it is the foundation of the whole *Calvinian Scheme*. Remove but this corner stone, and down tumbles the whole *Fabrick*: Keep them close to it to shew any clear *Scripture proof* for their sense of *Election*, or *Elect*, if they can, and you'll soon get rid of them. All dedicated to Christ by Baptism, all true Believers, are the *Elect* thro' the *New Testament*. If you will allow them their sense of the word *Elect*, you must grant them the doctrine of Perseverance; for it is a contradiction to say the *Elect*, in that sense, shall *finally perish*. I think I have fairly stated the Case; if I can but awaken any lulled asleep, out of the Golden Dream of *absolute Election*; if I have contributed in any degree to open the eyes of those of the *Separation* in my Parish, to see their *Error*, I have obtained the main end which I propos'd to myself. I pass on therefore to

C H A P. II.

Of PREDESTINATION consider'd.

GOD's absolute Fore-knowledge and Predestination, says Mr. N. do accompany Election, and are often join'd with it, (Rom. viii. 29. and 1 Pet. i. 2.) But there is no fore nor after in God; all things are present with him, and nothing is *left* to him. God knows all things, but he *fore-knows* nothing, because all things are present to him. The holy Scriptures speak to us after the manner of Men, and according to our Capacities, by the words *Predestinate* and *Predestinated*: For the word *Predestination*, is not, that I can find, in all the New Testament, and it is absurd to take them in the strict and literal sense, supposing a *time past in God*, and the *Decree already past*, concerning things to *come* with God. Therefore *whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate*, Rom. viii. 29. imports that whom God fore-knew, to be persons called according to his purpose, and therefore qualified for adoption: Those he fore-appointed to be conformed to the Image of his Son (by having their *vile bodies changed into the likeness of his glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21.) The *Elect*, 1 Pet. i. 2. are the converted Jews, according to the fore-knowledge of God, discovered in the prophetical writings, which fore-told of

these blessings to be convey'd to them by the *Messiah*. This Predestination affects all Christians; as to the *non-elect* it is no Scripture term. And if sin, foreseen, was not the cause of their *Non-election*, as he says, how could it be of their condemnation; is not justice herein concerned? How will this clear the Justice of God then, in damning the *non-elect* eternally for a sin which they could not avoid, or in vindication of his holy Law which they had no Power to obey.

Man was created upright, says he, God left him with perfect freedom of Will, to act in the strength of his **Creation-Grace**, but bad a perfect fore-sight, and absolute fore-knowledge that he would fall. What Jargon is here? where is *Creation-Grace* to be found in Scripture? but if this *Creation-Grace*, could not keep him from falling, of what use was such a Grace to him? The truth is, our author, tho' he dissembles the matter, with a dust of words to blind the ignorant Reader; the plain English of it is, that God laid a necessity upon *Adam* of sinning; and if so, how could he help it; nay, it was obeying God's Will to do it, and to damn him, and all his Posterity, who never consented to the sin, nor could, for doing what God laid him under an absolute necessity to do; and consequently was willing he should do; for they dare not allow of a conditionate Decree upon *Prescience*, is a Doctrine so far from clearing the Justice of God, that it lies hard both upon the Justice, Holiness, and Mercy of God. What sense can these words bear: *As I live, saith the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of sinners.* If we can believe

lieve that God did by an absolute Decree reprobate so many of them. And this Author was never more in the right, than by saying, *This makes our province the more difficult herein, to speak convincingly, and with due reverence and regard had to the awful Majesty of the great God, whose Judgments are past finding out.* But, pray, what has he, or we to do with those Judgements? I hope his reveal'd Will, is not past finding out.

Our Author, notwithstanding, takes courage, and says, except Man divests himself of Reason, and labours to divest the great Jebovab also of the Perfections of his Nature as God, it cannot be denied but that God did eternally and immutably, by the decree of his Will, fix all things whatsoever should be or come to pass in time, Isa. xlvi. 10. If so, I am sure it cannot be denied, that this makes God the Author of sin: For if there is nothing that comes to pass more frequently in the world than sin, as indeed there is not; then, if God has fixed this by the decree of his will, has he not ordained it? not by a bare permission, but eternally and immutably; and if this does not constitute man necessarily a sinner, then there is no significancy in words.
 " So that this at once destroys the plainest notions we can have of the nature of God,
 " who is essentially Good and Holy, and of
 " man who is naturally a free Creature; but
 " with this blasphemous difference, to the
 " dishonour of God, that it fixes all the guilt
 " upon him, seeing this Decree is supposed to
 " be the result of his Will, while it excuseth
 " man; he being determined by a superior
 " force.

Do not the Scriptures tell us plainly, says he, God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, Ephes. i. 11. Yes they do, but Mr. N. is mistaken, in making the object *all things* to be entities, or positive beings and, acts whatsoever. For the *all things* belongs to the subject matter of which the Apostle is here discoursing, to wit, that in the dispensation of his works of grace, God acts most freely, in communicating them to men, in order to bring them to Salvation. But not that by his positive influence men commit sin. Therefore the *all things* here cannot be extended to *all sin*; but as it is expressly said in the preceeding verse, to *all things in Christ*.

But the grand Cavil against absolute Predetermination is, says Mr. N. this makes God the author of *all sin*, and frees the Creature from all fault. It is so, and does so; get clear of it if you can. He owns, if this were true, it is enough to frighten every tender soul, which abhors the thoughts of such a black charge against the most holy God. But I shall take off this, says he. If you do Mr. N. you'll do more than ever was done by any Calvinist yet. I am afraid you have plunged your self into a Gulf, you will never get out of.

Well, how does he clear absolute Decrees from this black Charge. This he attempts to do by these two Propositions. First, that it belongs to the Perfections of God's Nature, as God, to fix by an immutable Act of his Will, from all eternity, all things whatever should be, or come to pass in time. But to this I have replied already, and therefore I shall pass by the flourish he makes under this head.

2dly,

adly, That it is absolutely impossible, and altogether inconsistent with the Perfections of God's Nature, as God to be the Author of sin as sin. This is very true, neither doth man commit sin as sin, but under some other Idea; but how doth this prove that absolute Decrees do not make God the Author of sin; to my thinking it proves the direct contrary. Yes, it does he thinks, For sin, says he, is a defect, therefore proceeds from some defective cause. But what if sin be a positive Being, there are some that think so; and if the deficient cause of things necessary be the efficient, this will not clear God from being the Author of it. Seeing it is not the defect, but something positive, that is the cause of sin; but granting it to be a defect, whence comes it? not from itself, for then it would have made itself more perfect, not from any other who is not the cause of it. Therefore this doctrine makes it proceed from God.

Sin, says Mr. N. came in thro' the defectibility of Adam's perfectly free-will. But whence came this defectibility, did it not come from him, who made him with a perfect freedom of Will? and seeing he was not made impeccable, did it not proceed from God (who as our author words it, created him perfect as a creature, yet mutable), that he had a power of sinning. Those Calvinists better versed in the Controversy than Mr. N. are aware of this Absurdity; and do allow, that in so far as God did not make man impeccable, the foundation of the possibility of sin, may be said to come from God. Tho' they make no scruple of saying, That he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

pass. If so, why was *Adam* required to obey in order to be happy, or threaten'd with death in case of disobedience to the Law given him? This supposes him inexcusable to abuse his liberty, and sin.

But this power to chuse evil may not be called, says our Author, a liberty of Will, but a weakness of Will; this God cannot do, nor the glorious Angels above, nor the glorify'd Saints, which are confirmed in true liberty of Will, and do necessarily and yet freely will bolineſſ. Now all this, tho' it be all the Calvinists have to say, is very impertinent, because neither God, nor the glorious Angels, nor the glorify'd Saints are in a state of tryal; as the state of man in this world is. And a freedom of the Will in a state of tryal, cannot consist with a determination to one, whether it be to good or evil. This would disable a man from chusing; and it is absurd to say, that men thus disabled, may deserve punishment for what they do, when they cannot do otherwise; because they disobey willingly, and chuse to do ſo; for if disabled, this very thing takes away their Liberty to chuse the good, or refuse the evil Action, as much as the greatest lameness does a Cripple's liberty from walking: Such new notions of Liberty are repugnant to the ſenſe and common reaſon of mankind. "We ſay not, says Mr. Thorn-
“dike, that indifference is requiſite to all free-
“dom, but to the freedom of Man alone, in
“this state of travail and profiſcence;" and is
not Man as much in a state of tryal in this life
as Adam was in Paradise; and muſt not the
want of God's confirming Grace, without which
he could not ſtand (the negative part of the Decree,

cree, as Mr. N. calls it) be the very cause of his fall. 'Tis more honest to speak out, and say, God put him under a necessity of falling, to advance his own glory. And that he denies supernatural saving grace to the non-elect to recover them, without which they cannot be saved. But tho' they are thus disabled, yet they must be eternally damned. Horrid Doctrine! No wonder Calvin himself called it, *horribile decre-
tum*. They are very *coative* Creatures indeed, that can bear this and not have the *Gripes*; or imagine that this Decree cannot be thought to impel Adam's Will to sin. Here was indeed a trial of the power of man's free-will for ever, when not depraved by sin. But does he believe Mankind to be under no Tryal since.

To Sin, says our Author, must have some natural good, for its substrate matter, as the subject it cleaveth to, as a rational creature, such as Angels and Man, whom God created Good, to whom he gave his law. It seems the light of nature, reading scripture, will not do the Business here, and some kind hand has help'd him to the light of Metaphysics to do it; and that for the sake of men of mean capacities, whose happiness it is, to like best, what they understand the least. Could there be (says he) any such positive thing, as absolute evil, it would necessarily destroy itself. Tho' the Manichees vainly imagined two first Principles, the one good, and the other evil. But is there nothing intrinsically evil, and in its own nature, immutable and eternally so, which has not yet destroyed itself. The Manichees was indeed a vain Imagination, but they had the modesty not to make one and the same God, good and evil.

All

All natural acts and motions of the creatures, physically consider'd, are (says Mr. N.) good, and from God, as the God of nature; but the same Acts, morally consider'd, as to the mode and manner of them, as acted by the Creature, may be vicious and sinful. This may satisfy men of mean Capacities; but a man capable of judging without prejudice, will easily discover that 'tis to no purpose to distinguish here betwixt the Act and its sinfulness, and to say, that God concurs towards the one, without being at all concerned in the other; seeing it is not as an Act, but as it is immoral, that Sin can be supposed to be the cause of man's damnation; so that if God was the Author of *selling Joseph into Egypt*, and of *the crucifying of Christ*. He must likewise be the Author of the sin of those that acted it, not as a bare Act, but as it was vicious and sinful, seeing as such only, it was a means to render them guilty; and the Act which God had absolutely determined them to commit, laid them under a necessity of committing the Sin, and did not suffer them to go on in the free use of those Powers that he had given them. If God's just hand was in the Act, infallibly determining them to commit it, doth not this convincingly shew, that the Author of a sinful Act, is the Author of the Sin also on which it depends, as a shadow upon its substance: The creature does not act independently of God, but in the free use of those Powers that God hath given every rational Being.

This Writer refers us to: *He turned their hearts to hate his people*, Ps. cv. 25. But this was not by any unfrustrable Operation or positive

sitive influx, only by his kindness to the *Israelites*, which had this effect upon the *Egyptians* to turn their hearts. Again, *He caused them to pity them*, Ps. cxi. 46. by their compassionately looking upon the misery and captivity they lay under. It may indeed appear by these things, that natural *Acts* are from God, in the same way that his Providence runs thro' the whole material World, but not that he determines every natural Act. And, *He turneth the heart which way he pleaseth*, Prov. xxi. 1. is to be understood of a moral not physical operation; good Counsel and Advice hath oftentimes a great influence upon the heart, whilst *evil communication corrupts good manners*. Hence, 'tis said, 1 Kings xi. 4. *That when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods.* That was by their wicked counsel, by which they made themselves the authors of Solomon's sin; and yet our Author's metaphysical distinction of *substrate matter* is as capable of clearing them of this sin, as it is of clearing *absolute Predestination* from the black charge of making God the Author of all the sin, *that cleaves to those natural Acts of the creatures in their defective manner they move and act in.*

To maintain this metaphysical *Substrate*, Mr. N. makes use of three Instances; the first is of *Alms* given without true *Charity*. But the sin here does not accompany the *Substrate*, i. e. the outward Act or material Part, but is separated from it by the Alms-givers imagination, and so does not reach the point. The second and third Instances are home, and do truly reach the point; but if in sending *Joseph* into *Egypt*, *God's hand was in it*, so as absolutely to

termine the Act, from whence it was impossible to separate the sin; he who determines the Act, must likewise will the Sin, because the *substrate* here cannot be separated from it. His Brethren were either under a necessity of selling Joseph or they were not; if not, 'twas in their power to do or not to do it; but if so, here's a *conditionate decree upon Prescience*, which *Calvinists* dare not allow. If under a necessity, 'tis obvious to men of the meanest capacities, this render'd the sin, not theirs, but his that laid upon them the unavoidable necessity of doing it. The same Answer will serve for the third Instance in *crucifying of Christ*; for the *determinate counsel of God*, laid the *Jews* under a necessity of doing it or it did not; if the first, they could not help it, and consequently are not to be charged with the sin of doing it. If the last then, the *determinate Counsel* did not put them under any *absolute decree*, and they might have abstained from that *vicious way they acted in it.*

Thus, says our Author, *have we cleared God's permissive Decree*; but what sort of *Logick* is this? he undertook to take off the black Charge against the Decree of *absolute Predestination*, and when he has shuffled and cut with the assistance of a metaphysical distinction, all he pretends to is, that he has cleared God's *permissive Decree*; pray, is an *Absolute Decree* and a *Permissive Decree* the same thing? it may be all one in a *Meeting*, but it is not so any where else. This puts me in mind of a Saying of the great *Scaliger*, which, if the Reader will excuse a little Pedantry, I make bold to set down.

*Non mibi sed Rationi, aut que ratio esse videtur,
Milito; securus, quid mordicus hic tenet aut hic.
nihil vino veluti rursum vixit.*

Mr. N. affirms, that never since Adam's Fall, neither he nor any of his natural posterity ever bad, whilst here, the true freedom of Will. But had not Jerusalem a freedom of being gathered to Christ if they would? if they had, I take this to be a true freedom of Will. If they had not, how comes it that Christ upbraids them, that they *would not come unto him, that they might have life?* For how could they, if they wanted the true freedom of Will. Now, as 'tis certain, that Christ would not have expostulated thus with them, if they had wanted true freedom of Will to comply with him. Tho' I own they had no power to do good works acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing them: But this being profer'd them, 'tis certain they had a freedom to comply, or not to comply with this Grace at pleasure; the Will is not destroyed by Grace but only repaired; Grace doth not take away the nature of the Will, but only enables it to obey God's Will; so that when it co-operates with the Will, Man is left in the hand of his own Counsel, to turn, or not to turn to the Lord. To say, as some do, that Christ spoke to Jerusalem only as Man, seems to be the last effort of a baffl'd Cause: For, as Man, he never spoke any thing that was not strictly true.

So that when it is objected, we are dead in trespasses and sins, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works; these Speeches are metaphorical and figurative, and the one capable of pre-

venting Grace, the other is not ; but neither sin nor Grace take away the natural power of the Will. And as one very well expresses it, " An old heart and a new heart differ only as an Instrument in tune, and the same Instrument out of tune ; there are the same strings still, but not the same ordering of them ; so the same Understanding, Will, and Affections a man had before, only placed on God, and delighting in Goodness, which before delighted in sin ; which they, (i. e. Calvinists) not minding, make a man meerly as a Tool in the hand of a Workman, or a pen in the hand of a Writer, meerly passive to any good action ". To say therefore that man is so utterly disabled by the fall of Adam, that without the efficacious Grace, which God vouchsafeth only to some few, who are the objects of his election to salvation, he hath no power to do what is spiritually good, or to avoid what is spiritually evil, must be destructive of the liberty belonging to man in a state of Tryal, Probation and Proficiency.

But the carnal mind is enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. So it is and cannot be subject to the law of God, whilst it continues such. But what then ? Why, says he, should any think that the holy Spirit, by working saving Grace in the heart of man, cannot turn (who ever said it cannot) the Byass of the Will again to chuse Holiness, and abhor sin, by setting it at liberty from its bondage, but cry out, This destroys the liberty of the Will ; and is not this true ? Does it not destroy the liberty of the Will by working irresistibly saving Grace in the heart of man, when we contribute nothing, nor can we contribute any thing to infinite Power.

Can

Can any, says he, count that liberty, to love sin? no certainly, but as David said to his Son Solomon, *Know thou the Lord of thy Fathers, and serve him with a willing mind;* (this we count Liberty.) If thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Here is Liberty either to co-operate with the Grace of God offered, or to refuse it, as Solomon pleased.

But, I suppose, says he, it is the Sovereignty of God in his absolute Decrees, which spoils sinners power in saving themselves, that mainly pinches. What sinners are those that think to save themselves without Faith and Repentance? absolute Decrees pinches only those who maintain them. Others take the Word of God for it that there are no such Decrees. They have no such Idea of the Sovereignty of God, as is inconsistent with his other essential Attributes and Perfections of his Nature: They think more worthily of God, than to believe that his Decrees of governing and disposing of them, are wholly founded on such an absolute Will, as no rational or wise Man acts by. They believe him to be *Holy, Merciful and Righteous*; and that in speaking of himself in Scripture, he is pleased, with relation to those Attributes, to make Appeals to men, to call them to reason with him.

Our Author thinks *Reprobation* is a harsh word to be rejected; but whose fault is it, that it is not rejected. Reject absolute Predestination, and you'll hear no more of Reprobation, which necessarily follows it, and can no more be rejected, than the shadow from the substance. I own Mr. N. has reason to say so; for to any one

one, of his Doctrine, and of a melancholly Disposition, it is most dangerous; it hurries them to the brink of Despair, and too often forces them to do execution upon themselves. But it is no Election, says he, if some are not passed by and left out: Right, and therefore we pray for the Conversion of all Jews, Turks, and Infidels, who are left out. But all Christians are as much in the Decree of Election as any Christian, they being *all an elect generation*, 2 Pet. ii. 9. and all Christians who *repent and believe the Gospel*, are as much assured of Heaven and eternal Happiness as any of God's Elect; because God gave his only begotten Son: *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life* *. This makes root and branch work of the Doctrine of absolute Election. We are saved, says the Apostle, by Grace, i. e. by Favour we are brought into a state of Salvation, and are sure to be made partakers of Christ's salutary Passion, upon condition of our faith, repentance, and sincere obedience to the Laws of the New Covenant. Let those that go to the Meeting, take Mr. N's word for it; I hope all serious Christians in the Communion of the Church, will take God's word for it, that these are not precarious uncertain Conditions.

To be passed by, and left out of the Decree: *This left them pure Creatures, and damns none*, says he, *no more than if there had been no Election in Christ*. But are any Christians out of the said Election admitted to Heaven? If they are then to be *left pure Creatures* is no

* John iii. 16.

great

great harm: But, if, as he must say, they are not, then they were created on purpose to be damned. What Christian Ear can bear the sound of such Doctrine; it were impossible to work rational Creatures up to the belief of such a blasphemous Tenet, if they were not at the same Time wrought up to a stout Belief of being themselves in the *absolute Decree of Election*. Pitiful Delusion! we all are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works; which God hath before ordain'd that we should walk in them†; and by this it is, that any fallen sinners escape the curse of a broken Covenant; and without this, not one fallen sinner, tho' writ in the book of Life *, can, through the Merits of Christ, come to Heaven, or escape the curse: It is this, says he, *damns sinners, not God's secret Decree, but a violated Law*. If it does, then, according to our Author's Doctrine, they were damned before the Law was either made or violated: Neither can I see, as to earthly Judges, where the Justice of that Judge is, who forces a man to violate the Law, that he may have the pleasure of hanging him for it. But might not God, as Sovereign, (says Mr. N.) have the liberty to have mercy on whom he will (Rom. ix. 15.) and leave the rest to Justice. Yes, surely; for as a Sovereign, he hath offered a Pardon to all sinners; and they that will not accept of it, ought to be left to Justice. How miserably deluded are such, in whose heads, *Have mercy on whom he will*, runs like a new Tune. The import of which is only this, that it belongs to God to appoint upon what

† Ephes. ii. 10.

* Phil. iv. 3.

terms he will shew mercy, and justify men; whether by the Law of *Faith* or by *Works*; must be save all or none, says Mr. N. To which I answer, God saves none against their Will; but all upon the terms of the *Gospel* are put into a Capacity of being saved; and we think this is enough, and more than the tenour of the *Law* allowed to man, and much more than was indulged to the *Angels* that fell.

Is this practicable, says he, *among earthly Princes*? Yes, certainly, no earthly Prince will pardon any man, that does not comply with the Conditions of the Pardon; if they did, it would encourage rebellion and make a nothing of all just Law's. *Act Reason*; says our Author, *I suppose we have clear'd God's secret Decrees from being the cause of Man's sin*, but if they be secret, how comes he to know them; a secret is no longer a secret, when it is reveal'd, and before it is, it is not possible to know it. Our Author acts Reason here, full as well as the man did, who undertook to explain the word *Preface*, by saying, it was a hard word for *Aritkmetick*.

The next thing Mr. N. undertakes, is to clear the Providence of God, in the execution of his *Counsels*; and here, upon the supposition of God's working efficaciously in all things, guiding and directing all natural *Acts* and *Motions* of his *Creatures*, — to answer his secret fixed *Counsels*, he quotes Rom. ix. 19. which to me is a demonstration that St. Paul had no notion of absolute *Grace*, when he started this Objection, and said, for who hath resisted his Will; because it is a contradiction to imagine, that *irresistible*

irresistible Grace can be resisted. To this *cavil*, the *Spirit replies*, says Mr. N. *nay*, but O man, wbo art thou that repliest against God? must not God (says he) govern the World? Ay, most certainly; but we say, God does not govern it by any physical, or irresistible Operation; and that the meaning of the *Reply* here, is this, “ That there is no more cause “ from God’s dispensation in this case, in “ taking away the means of Grace from, “ and rejecting such an harden’d People, “ and shewing his *Favour* unto others, who “ submit to his terms of mercy to make this “ Objection, than for the clay of *Jeremiab*, “ when it was *marred* and *broken**; to complain against the *Potter*, that he took one “ part of it, and made a vessel of dishonour, “ and another part of it, and made it a “ vessel of honour.”.

Mr. N. thinks some believe the *Will of man* to be *such a Lady* as to be *without controul*. She is indeed such a *coy Lady*, that if the least *violence* be offered, *she may lawfully call it a Rape*, and be absolved from the Crime. She *may not be touched*, says our Author, *by God himself*, lest *be destroy its Nature as a Will*. We think *irresistible Grace offers Violence to the Will*, and *destroys its Nature as a Will*; and therefore is not *touched by God himself* after that manner; and our reason for this is, that it were in vain to perswade us to do, what God alone, solely and wholly doth in us; it cannot be called my act, which was never elicited by me, nor can I be said to believe and

* Jer. xviii. 4, 6.

repent, when I do not concur towards either with the faintest Velleity ; and we don't think the wise Man, but this Author, quite out, in the meaning of Prov. xxi. 1. Similitudes halt, and don't always run upon all four. Men when they turn Rivers, don't indeed destroy them ; but they force them to run in the Channel which they have made for them. And if God does so to the Heart, we cannot think, that in so doing, he doth work suitably, or agreeable to our Nature as rational Creatures. And here I chuse (having, I think, a perfect freedom of Will to do so) to express my self in the words of a very ingenious Writer*. God gives us a power to will, and still assists us with his Grace, 'till we bring that Power into Act, and so a man works out his own salvation, and he ought to do it, with fear and trembling ; that is, he ought with reverence and godly fear, stand in awe ; lest when God enables him to work, he be wanting to himself, and the Grace of God ; lest he grieve and quench the Spirit, and cause him to depart, this is not acting independently on God ; but if a Man concur only subjectively and passively to pious works, as they would have it, then it must be said, or may truly be said, at least, that God in us believes, repents of sin, and doth all other gracious Acts, which how absurd and blasphemous it would be (says he) I leave the World to judge ; and it is thus, and not by any other unseen wheel within a wheel, that God's own hand directs us to the end proposed by him : As to the Instances concerning Joseph, and that of the Crucifixion of Christ, I have above replied

* Battal's Vulgar Errors, p. 96.

to them : And the same Answer will serve for the Instance in Job, and in the whole book of Esther.

As for the Non-elect (says Mr. N.) as God in his permissive Decree, his Will was not to prevent their Fall in Adam, so not to recover them because fallen, these being left to themselves in both, ruin themselves for ever, and act freely therein they sin by choice, and so their condemnation will be just : God's Decree offers no Violence to their Wills ; — but God decreed not to work upon their will by his holy Spirit, to change and turn them, so they are left to try what they can or will do to turn themselves ; and that is just nothing at all ; nay, such Doctrine makes it to be in obedience to God's Will, and not by Choice that they sin, and if God's Decree offers no Violence to their Wills, yet 'tis the same thing, if without the assistance of his holy Spirit, which they are denied, they ruin themselves ; or rather are infallibly ruined thereby. They are precluded Access to Salvation by an irreversible (which our Author softens by the Name of a permissive) Decree. And why should God declare, if they believe, repent and turn, and have new hearts and true holiness, they shall live : When according to this Doctrine, none of these can make their Case better nor worse, it being unalterably fixed by a prior Will, without regard to any, or all of them. " If Zeleucus, " (says the last quoted Writer) put out both " the Eyes of an Adulterer for Adultery, " and then offer him his Book to read, and " hang him because he cannot read ; was the " offer of the Psalm of Mercy, a Mercy to " him or a Mockery ? So if God first blind our

" Understanding, and harden our Hearts, as
 " a punishment of our sin in *Adam*, and
 " then make us a tender of Grace in Christ,
 " but never open our Understandings to see it,
 " nor soften our Hearts so far, that if we will,
 " we may embrace it, but all his Offers are
 " upon impossible Terms to be accepted,
 " whether is not the Case alike or parallel?

However, says Mr. N. we are plainly told in the Scriptures, that final Unbelievers, and impudent sinners, shall perish, and without holiness no Man shall see the Lord. These are (not as he said before, precarious, uncertain Conditions, but) the appointed means that lead to their distinct ends. But to what purpose are we we so plainly told this, or why should these be the appointed Means, seeing the *Non-elect*, must be without them, their Fate being already absolutely determined.

If it might not look too like insulting, I would now call upon Mr. N. to *all Reason*, I suppose he hath not cleared God's secret Decrees from being the Cause of Man's sin. Thus having, with great Patience, got through this shocking Chapter, which could not well have been crowded into a shorter compass; I don't design to dwell so long upon the following Chapters. By what hath been said, an ordinary Reader may see through all that Mr. N. hath, or can advance, to support such a wretched Doctrine.

C H A P. III.

Of Creation, Law of Nature, and Sinai's
Covenant Considered.

Sect. ii. GOD having thus created Man,

Gsays Mr. N. thought meet to govern such a rational Creature according to Covenant-contract, and not altogether in an arbitrary way. Our Author has, all of a sudden, shifted his exalted Idea's of God's Sovereignty, from an absolute to a contracting Sovereign. I suppose the absolute Sovereignty of God mainly pinches here. But where is this Covenant-Contract to be found, it is not expressly mentioned in all the Bible; the Assemblies Catechism indeed tells us of a *Covenant made with Adam*; but the Apostle, as quoted by our Author, expressly calls it, a *Command*, not *Covenant*. Rom. vii. and Mr. N. owns that which formed the *Covenant of Life and Death* was a positive *Command*, Gen. ii. 17. *Thou shalt not eat of it*, with a Sanction annexed, *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*. This was the will of the Sovereign, and therefore a *Law*, no *Covenant*. I question whether God's Vicegerent in England, would allow an *Act of Parliament* to be called a *Covenant*.

This Step, as Bishop Burnet tells us * was made by all the followers of St. Austin, who believed that a *Covenant was made with all Mankind in Adam*, as their first Parent. But, says he, p. 115. other Divines think it strange that a thing of such Consequence, as a suppos'd *Covenant with Adam as the representative Head*

* On the IXth Article.

of Mankind, should not have been more plainly reported in the History of Creation. But that Men should be put to fetch out the Knowledge of so great and so extraordinary a thing, only by some remote Consequence. And it is, says he, no small prejudice against this Opinion, that it was so long before it first appeared in the Latin Church; that it was never received in the Greek Church. Our Author therefore should have brought some clear Proof for it, before he had said, *thus it became a Covenant-Contract between God and Man in one common head.* And what he adds, is very much out of the way, bence by a Metaphor, Death is called **wages**, Rom. vi. 23. as due in Justice for something done according to Contract. Right, but it is according to a Contract with Sin, not according to a Contract between God and Man. Hence Death is in the same place, expressly called the *wages of sin*; and tho' *Man in the dim light of Nature, gropes in the dark after a God*, yet by the clear Light of the Gospel, he knows very well what to fix upon for God.

When the world was thus grossly benighted, says he, *it pleased God to give out to Israel (Jacob's Posterity) at (he should have said on) Mount Sinai, a written Copy of the law of Nature* (not all of it of the law of nature, nine of the ten words only are principles and Duties of Natural Religion²) *which he calls his Covenant, as intending thereby to represent to them his broken Covenant.* This wants proof, and Mr. N's saying, *Therefore this was twice written by the Finger of God in tables of stone*, is no proof of it;

² Neither do I believe that the Decalogue was intended for a perfect System of the Moral Law.

what

what follows is indeed a very good reason of their being twice written ; but Moses threw down the two Tables the first time and broke them. But it wants proof again to know whether this was to shew Man had broke the whole Law ; and let any man if he can, find out of Deut. x. 5. that Moses was a type of Christ by laying the Law up in the Ark.

The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord by God ; this was, says he, Creation-sabbath, which day was to be observed until the true Redemption-rest came in. If it was so, I should be much obliged to him to give me one Instance out of Scripture, that Creation-sabbath was so much as once observed from Adam to Moses, a space of at least 2000 Years ; nor can I find, tho' he says so, that the ten Commandments contained all those Rites and Ceremonies, instituted Worship, Church Order and Discipline, called the Law of Moses. A man that talks at this rate, may say any thing ; and that when one thing is expressed, twenty more are intended. The bare repeating of this is enough to expose it. But if the Ten Commandments contain all these things, how came it to pass, that they did not end that learned Dispute managed so hotly, between two famous leading Rabbies of the Independent Way, Ainsworth and Broughton, whether the Colour of Aaron's Linnen Ephod were of blue, or a Sea-water green. A Controversy of that mighty importance (as my Author says, ^a) to the salvation of souls, that (besides that it occasioned some

^a Parker's Def. of Eccles. Polity. p. 454.

O 1 301

bloody Noes) it created new Schisms, and founded new Churches; and what became of the blue separation, says he, I cannot at present call to mind; but as for the brethren of the sea-water green Communion, they crumbled into as many Schisms and Churches as there are Colours in the Rainbow.

Our Author will not allow Sinai's Covenant to be the first in respect of the Covenant of Works, or the real Covenant of Grace; and all this only to secure his pretended first Covenant with *Adam*, in direct contradiction to the Apostle, who expressly calls Sinai's Covenant, as Mr. N. phrases it, the *First*. But *first* and *second* are numerically distinct, says he; they are so, what then; why adds he, then this at *Sinai* could not be the *first*, and so goes on to the Covenant dispensed to *Adam* and two more; and upon this, what the word of God calls the *first*, he calls the *fourth*: Now I believe the Apostle could tell that 2 and 3 make 5, as well as Mr. N. and yet he says, *if that first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second*, Heb. viii. 7. *Faultless* doth not here signify sinful in it self, for this the Apostle denies, Rom. vii. 7. but only *imperfect* and *defective* as to the great End of the Covenant, *Do this and live*, it being a Law that *could not give life*, Gal. iii. 21. for had it been so, then should no place have been sought for the *second*, which was established upon better Promises, ver. 6. An old Covenant and a new may therefore properly be called the *first* and *second*, whatever Mr. N. thinks to the contrary. The Covenant of Grace was indeed confirmed long before by *Promise*; for to

Abraham

Abrabam and his Seed were the promises made, Gal. iii. 17. But the old Covenant of Works was in being long before the new Covenant of Grace; and when he proves it to be a figurative Testamentary and Church Covenant, it will then be time enough to return an Answer to it.

Conformity to the moral Law, is to be, says our Author, still preffed after from Gospel Principles to Gospel Ends. I am glad he is so good a Friend to dry Morality, as fome call it; and I agree with him againſt ſome found in the Faith whom he honours; that Men are not meer Machines: But I cannot agree with either about Sinai's Covenant; because I do verily believe it to be the covenant of Works, for ten Reasons, the first is, for as many as are of the works of the Law, are under the Curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them, Gal. iii. 10. The other nine I leave to another occasion.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Covenant of Redemption Conſider'd.

HOW this comes to be called a *Covenant*, Mr. N. gives no Scripture Proof. *Redemption*, says Mr. N. from the Hebrew Root [be Redeemed] signifieth to recover. Thus it is to

read Hebrew by the *Light of Nature*; you may take my word for it Mr. N. that [be Redeemed] hath no mote of the nature of a Hebrew Root, than *Horse-Radish*, they being both of English growth. The Thought he aimed at, supposing him to know Hebrew, was this; that the word *Redemption*^b in Hebrew coming from the Hebrew Root *גָּאַל* *gaal*, in English, *be redeemed*, signifieth *to recover*, (he should have said *recovery*); but what the wiser are men of mean capacities for all this? It is true, that this Hebrew Root is well render'd in English (*be redeemed*) but so it may likewise be render'd (the Author knows what I mean) in *Niphal*, *be defiled himself*, and in *Piel* and *Hiphil*, *he polluted*, or *he defiled*; but these things are of no great use to a congregational Church; 'tis of much more moment to know that the *Redemption* purchased by *Christ*, puts us only into a Capacity of being *recovered* and set at liberty out of our *Captivity*; and that he who will not believe the *Gospel*, but chuses still to be a slave, 'tis his own fault if he misses the Benefit of *Christ's Redemption*: The price of which was the *Blood* of him who was both *God* and *Man* in one *Person*, *Heb.* ix. 12. and I do acknowledge that infinite *Wisdom* found out this *Ransom*, *an infinite person to be a Kinsman and Redeemer*.

But I can't go along with our Author in his saying, *Job, an early Saint, doth elegantly express his Faith in this Mystery,* (Chap. xix. 25.)

^b There is another Word for *Redemption* in Hebrew, *פִּידְחָה* *Pidb-jon* read twice, *Ps.* xl ix. and *Exod.* xxi. 30. to which it cannot here be applied.

I know that Gaeli liveth. For, first, I wonder that those who scruple to give the Title of *Saint* to any of the Apostles, make none to give it to *Job*, who could not be a *Saint* in the Gospel sense of the Word, that is, a *Christian*. Neither, Secondly, doth it appear to me through the whole Book, that *Job* had any more Knowledge of a Redeemer in the Gospel sense of the Word, than he had of *Printing*; tho' our Translation, verse 23. makes him wish that his *Words* were *printed in a Book*; for *Printing* was not invented some Thousands of Years afterwards, it must mean *described* or *engraven* in a Book. Thirdly, *Job* could not say, *my Redeemer liveth* in the Gospel sense, as he was Man, above 2000 Years before he *lived* or *was born*.

If with *Pineda*, and some much more antient *Commentators*, it be allowed, that *Job* had a traditional Knowledge of the *Promise* of the *Messias*, and that 'tis certain as to his *Divinity*; *He ever lives, is the living God*; yet it is more probable, that *Job*, by *Redeemer*, might mean *God the Father*, by which Title he is often called in *Scripture*, see Ps. xix. 14. Ps. lxxviii. 35. and in many other places. *Liveth*, in the *present Tense*, says our Author, it is so in *English*; but if he means it is so in the *Original*, 'tis somewhat unfortunate, for the *Hebrews* have no *present Tense* for their *Verbs*, tho' they have for the Participle *Benoni*; therefore in the *Original* it signifies *living*. But when he was in the parsing humour, I wonder he did not parse *Gaeli*, because there is a possessive Pronoun lies in the end of that Word so snug, that a

whole congregational Church may go over it twenty times and never find it out.

Redemption, says Mr. N. must necessarily be effectual to reach its Ends; that is no Redemption that brings not back the Captive. What! whether the Captive will or no? If a Man pays the Debt of all the insolvent Debtors in any Prison, is it not effectual, and doth it not reach the end of his Bounty, unless he pulls out by force every insolvent Debtor that has a mind to stay in Prison, after his Debt is paid. *At Reason*, Mr. N. and not put your Readers off with saying, Those that can satisfy themselves that such are redeemed that eternally perish, speak as good sense if they say, their Lands are redeemed that are by Law and Justice kept out of their Possession. If they be Copy-hold, and they refuse to take them up after due Notice given, the Lord of the Mannor may keep them out of possession both by Law and Justice: And if they be Freehold forfeited by Rebellion, if they will not come and accept of them upon the Terms of their Pardon, 'tis but just they should be kept out of them. I think this is very good sense, and I assure you I can never, on this head, take up with your sense in expounding Scripture, and representing the Design of Christianity in so odd a disguise; for all Christians are the Children of God by Faith in Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 16. and Christ has thereby the whole Glory of a compleat Redeemer.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

*Of the Covenant of GRACE con-
sider'd.*

FROM the Covenant of Redemption with Christ, ^c says Mr. N. flows a Covenant of absolute Grace to the Redeemed: Prove that if you can; by what hath been said, I believe 'tis plain, that the Reader ought not to take your bare word for it: *Justified freely by his Grace* does not prove it; if by *absolute* you mean an *irresistible Grace*, for the Grace here meant, is the *Gospel*, thro' the preaching of which, Men are called to the *Faith*, and when they embrace that Call, are said to be *justified freely by his Grace*, and in this sense I own the *Grace of God that bringeth Salvation* is *absolute*, there being nothing either in Jew or Gentile, which made them worthy of this Revelation, nor any Condition required on their part, that it might be preached to them; and when I come to the Chapter of *Justification*, I shall observe the mistake of those who maintain, that *Justification is an Act of God's free Grace wherein be pardoneth all our sins*; ^d and if there was an eternal Grant from the Father to the Son as *Redeemer*, that upon condition be laid down his

^c Where is this Covenant to be found in Scripture?
^d *Assemblies Catechism.* Quest. 33.

Life a Ransom, his redeemed (by the by, that is all Christians) should have eternal life freely, Tit. i. 2. Can any be so void of sense as to believe there are no *Conditions* required of the *Redeemed*; or, that the *Faith* required is not an operative *Faith*, productive of good *Works*, not barely a stout *Belief*, whereas it signifies only *Trust* or *Faithfulness*.

The *remedial Promise*, not *new Law Covenant*, as he vainly calls it, was made to *Adam* after his Fall; and God grants free *Remission of sin and eternal life*, not by way of *absolute Promise*, (but upon Condition of *Faith* and *Repentance*) *thro' a Redeemer*. What Mr. N. calls *absolute and amazing Grace*! is the *Grace* of the *Gospel*, tho' he mistakes it for *irresistible Grace*, and tells us, *a conditional Promise is a Bar put to suspend the Benefit promised upon that Condition, until the Condition be performed*; and yet we are as sure as the Bible can make us, that upon the *non-performance* of *Faith*, i. e. *Faithfulness* and *good Works*, *the Promise is of no force*: For *the Promise* (made to *Abraham*) *was not made to him or to his seed through (or by virtue of their obedience to) the Law*, but *thro' (and by virtue of) the Righteousness of Faith*, Rom. iv. 13, otherwise *Faith*, or *Faithfulness is made void*; and where *Faith* is opposed to *Works*, it is the *Works* of the *Law*. For *what does it profit, my Brethren, tho' a man say he hath Faith and have not Works (to evidence his Faith) can (such a naked, fruitless) Faith save him*? I am resolved to take the Apostle's

^f James ii. 14.

and not Mr. N's word here, and do firmly believe, that what God of his meer Grace, (i. e. Favour) absolutely promises, is made sure to us no other way. I will daily beg the assistance of God's holy Spirit to enable me to comply with the Apostle St. Paul's Exhortation. Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord &c. I do consider Faith as a Work and not as a meer Belief, and think no rolling on Christ without such a Faith, will carry me to Heaven. These Creature-Acts, as he calls them, were thought very necessary in St. Paul's days, and I think to the full as necessary now.

I am not at all the less in Love with them for Mr. N's calling them Sparks of their own Fire. I think all serious Christians, are well qualified with those Sparks for the promise. I know nothing of closing in with an Object by pure Faith, as he calls it. Pure Faith is to me, like a Tree without Fruit, and is not what the Scripture calls Faith in Jesus Christ. And when St. Paul saith, *He worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly*: that is, he hath not any thing on account of which he can be deemed righteous by virtue of his Works; does this exclude Obedience from having any thing to do in the Affair of Justification? doth not the same Apostle order us to *work out our Salvation*; and this must be by Faith in Christ, and obedience

* 1 Cor. xv. 58. * Rom. iv. 5.

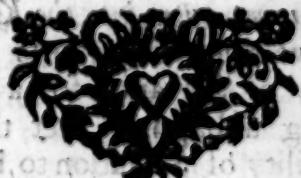
to his Commandments ; and God thus *justifies* the ungodly, repenting of, and engaging to cease from their Ungodliness.

All those, says Mr. N, given to Christ to redeem, John xvii. 6. included in the secret Decree, were all absolutely redeemed by him, and are thereby under that promise of eternal Life secretly, as granted to Christ, Tit. i. 2. If it be secretly, how can he, or any one, know it. But if all given Christ to redeem, were all absolutely redeemed, how came Judas to be lost ? Will the Guard here put in by you, relieve you. How do we know that he was not included in the secret Decree ? 'tis certain he was given to Christ, and can we think God would have given him any that was not in the secret Decree ? *Absolutely redeemed* is an *unscriptural Phrase*, St. Paul was a stranger to it, and by the *Faith of God's Elect* *. He means the *Faith of all Christians*, who are the *Seed* to whom the *Promise is sure*, Rom. iv. 16. and are all put in a Capacity of being saved through Christ, but not one more than another *absolutely redeemed*.

When the Spirit applies the Benefits of Redemption, he thereby gives, says Mr. N. vital Union to Christ ; then are they taken into the Bond. Right, all are so, young and old, when rightly and carefully baptised. *Baptism is the Bond of this open Covenant of Grace*, and if Parents were duly apprized of this, they would run Twenty Miles, rather than neglect to have their Children baptized by a *lawful Minister* ; especially those who are not profess'd

* Tit. i. 1.

Anabaptists. When *this* taken into the Covenant, *this*, says he, is a Marriage-Contract; This is right again, but are all taken in thus contracted or no? if all, then *all* have an equal Right to the Promises, and none are more absolutely redeemed than another; if they are not all thus contracted, then it follows, that the Elect may finally perish, for such only are taken into the Bond of this open Covenant of Grace: Hence, says Mr. N, there are many Promises that seem to carry a Condition in them. I wish he would instance a Scripture-Promise that does not, I am sure that to such as love him, trust in him, fear him, obey him, keep his Covenant, hope in his Mercy, carry the Condition along with them, if there be any signification in Words; and I can't help thinking that they form an Object for Faith firstly and directly to close in with; and it does not follow, that because the first Grace (i. e. Favour) was absolute, in the sense I have explained it, that therefore all the Promises are without any Condition; neither can I conceive of what use the Assistance of God's holy Spirit can be to any Christian under absolute Promises.



C H A P. VI.

The Visible Seals of Covenant-Relation.

THIS Chapter mostly concerns the *Anabaptists*, and till Mr. N. proves that either he or they have any *Power* or *Authority* to apply the *Visible Seals*, we need not trouble our selves much about it ; let our Author prove his *Office-Power* if he can ; let him clear himself of what the *Prophet* charges upon *Hananiab*. Hear now *Hananiab the Lord bath not sent thee, but thou makest this People trust in a lie*, Jer. xxviii. 15. I will take no advantage here, tho' our Author lies open in every Page ; I shall only inform him that St. *Cyprian*, in a Council of 66 Bishops about 150 Years after the Apostles, held, that to suffer an Infant to die unbaptized, was to endanger it's Salvation ; which they, and many other Fathers, grounded upon *John* iii. 5. *except a Man* (in the original 'tis except a Person, or except One *) *be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*. And tho' we think it imports not an *absolute* impossibility of Salvation for a Child by mischance dying unbaptis'd ; yet that it imports an impossibility of Salvation to be had, according to God's *ordinary Rule* and Declaration, any other way than by *Baptism*, appears to me

* Man, Woman, or Child.

very plain. *Let such as go beyond this Rule, and exclude the Children of Christians, who are not in their unscriptural Covenant, from Baptism, answer for themselves, I shall not undertake to answer for them:* Especially for Mr. N. who imagines that Baptism coming in the room of Circumcision, is an unanswerable Argument against the Anabaptists, who will first set him to prove that it does, and when he has (as he thinks) proved it, they will ask, how come the Female Sex to be admitted into the new Covenant, since none were admitted into, or had the *Seal* of the old Covenant. He needs be in no pain, others have much better Arguments, than he can urge, to convince Anabaptists.

C H A P. VII.

Of C A L L I N G consider'd.

CALLING, says Mr. N. is (2.) *internal and effectual upon the Heart*: It is so, but not by *irresistible Grace*, else, *the many called*, Mat. xxii. 14. would necessarily be also *chosen*. And I cannot understand how this *calling* doth not suppose a *Willingness or Power in fallen Man* to comply with it. Because our blessed Lord hath plainly told us that it doth, by saying, and *ye would not**? Is this, Mr. N., *meer trifling with Scripture*? I know of none beside

* Mat. xxiii. 37.

Calvinists, who say, that a bare *Affent*, or, in our Author's Language, *pure Faith*, is all that's required; and that this must be wrought by some *positive Influx*. To an enquiring Soul, the Scriptural Answer at hand is, *Believe in (on Mr. N. quotes it) the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved* *. And it is granted that the *Spirit works the Grace of Faith, and strengthens the Faculty to act*; but not irresistibly, for then there would be no occasion to persuade a soul to believe, where the *Faculty* must comply, and stands in need of no other means to do it. Neither is the *effectual Call*, in our Author's sense, proved from *1 Thes. ii. 13.* but (as it is in Truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. It is certain that it effectually worketh in those that believe, but not by *absolute or irresistible Grace*. For God hath saved us (i. e. designed us for salvation, *1 Thes. v. 9.*) and (in pursuance to that design hath) called us with an *holy Calling*, not according to our *Works*, but according to his own *Purpose and Grace*, (see *Tit. iii. 5, 6.*) which was given (i. e. determined to be given) us in Christ before the World began †.

I am to learn what Mr. N. means by *common legal convictions of sin*. I hope he does not call any Conviction that proceeds from the hearing of the word of God read or preached, a *legal Conviction*. I allow that God lets in to the Mind of a sinner, sometimes a spiritual supernatural Light; but it is by a moral, not physical Operation ||. The Account

* *Acts xvi. 31.* † *2 Tim. i. 9.* || See
Prov. i. 24. and *Isa. lxv. 12.*

this

this Author gives us of his own *Conversion*, or Experience, I must call it rank *Enthusiasm*, it is an *Impetus*, of which neither he nor any of his People can give any rational Account*; and supports them against all the Assaults of Scripture and Reason; for to what purpose is it to adduce either against them who think they have the Spirit, which is above Reason. And as one has described it, and seems to be what our Author admits: “ That at first “ gloomy Melancholy dwells in their Coun- “ tenances, and perhaps possesses their Souls, “ (Mr. N. calls it *the black sin of unbelief,*) “ and then a faint Ray displays it self; some- “ times they are upon the brink of Despair, “ and at other times they conclude all is well “ with them, to use their own *Cant.* They “ continue under these *Agitations*, till either “ Despair forces them to make away with “ themselves; or till their Hopes chance so “ far to overcome their Fears, that they “ think they feel the darkness gradually dis- “ sipating, and see the Sun of Righteousness “ beginning to appear; they feel (as Mr. “ N. hints at it) the struggles of the Babe of “ Grace in the place of the bringing forth of “ Children, a passage of the Prophet imperti- “ nently applied by them to this purpose, “ and they can tell you the critical Minute “ when they were delivered.” Now the French Prophets had all these *Agitations* to a

* I have heard of some that ridicul'd the *Mechanical Conversions*; who were so much Masters of the *Crafts* of their Bodies, that they could work themselves into these Exercises.

much

much greater Degree, and yet we all know they were mere cheats, and diabolical Deceivers, and under a powerful Delusion. And for some *Dissenters* to make this the depth of the *Mystery*, the distinguishing *Privilege* of those of their way, is too much (I'm sorry for it) resembling those *French* Miscreants.

The uncommon Influences of the Spirit were withdrawn many Centuries ago, when the extraordinary Purposes for which they were vouchsafed, were sufficiently served, and the *Conversions* of St. *Paul*, &c. are attended with Circumstances too singular to be drawn into a Precedent by any other, especially where Christianity has been so long professed: But how shall we convince these Men of this dangerous Delusion, here's the hard Task, you can't make them sensible of the Prevalency of those animal Fervors, they call Experience, which rise in proportion to the heat of the Brain, and the Motion of the *animal Spirits*, and their Reason is so captivated by their *Fancy* and *Passions*, that it cannot be attacked, and this renders it almost impossible to undeceive them ; they being for the most part, people of stronger Fancy than Judgment, and whose Passions stretch farther than their Reason ; and this makes them so susceptible of *animal* Impressions. But the Fathers, and first Preachers of the Christian Faith, did not amuse silly and well meaning People, with such fond Stories of unaccountable horrors and desertions of Soul, “ but “ turn'd them over, as one expresses it, to “ the testimony of their own Consciences, “ and the sense of their own Integrity, to “ preserve

" preserve the quietness of their Minds, and
 " always confined the Ordinary Workings of
 " the Spirit of God, to the Methods of Rea-
 " son and Discourse."

Primitive Christianity was not acquainted with the Phrase *Our Christ*, in the Sense it is taken by some now-a-days. As if Christ were the Saviour of a select few only, and not of all dedicated to him by Baptism; every Christian then believed that Christ had Redeemed him and all Mankind. They never did allow that that could be the Spirit of God that prompted Men to continue in, and propagate Schism, a Sin ranked by St. Paul, with Murder and Adultery. " These, and infinite more, are the Tricks and Frenzies of a new-fangled Divinity, which censures and despises all but themselves, as carnal Gospellers." I shall conclude this Chapter, with what a very learned writer observes on this Head. + Say what you will, prove what you can, demonstrate the incoherence of their Notions, and the wildness of their Conceits, they will foil all your Wit and carnal Reason with a caution against vain Philosophy and human Learning, and a disdainful Reflection upon the natural Man's ignorance in the things of the Spirit. — Their Female Proselytes, says he, must outwardly pity, and inwardly scorn you: Alas, poor Man! this 'tis to be a Stranger to the workings of the Spirit of God, and to be ignorant of the Mysteries of the Covenant of Grace. * What strange Conceptions has the poor Soul of Regeneration, of the Spirit of Bondage, and the method of Conversion. —

+ Defence of Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 120, 121.

What a comfortable Light have I, by the Teachings of the Spirit, and precious Mr. — whilst a veil of Darkness bides these gracious Comforts and Privileges, from the Eyes of this Natural Man. Thus, says he, they prostitute the Dignity of Religion, — and upbold the Interest of the Party, by the Zeal and Clamour of that Sex. Nothing so resolute as they at holding fast Conclusions; they will die Martyrs to their Truth, before they know their Premises; and if they once chance to fasten upon a Proposition, they will never quit their Hold, while they have either Teeth or Tongue.

Therefore, let all such as do partake of this pretended *heavenly Call*, remember to shew forth the Praises of Him that hath called them out of *Darkness* into his *marvellous Light of the Gospel*, which will shew them, if not perverted, that this pretended *Call*, is a mere *Delusion*.

C H A P. VIII.

Of JUSTIFICATION consider'd.

THE term (*Justify*) says Mr. N. is forensic, (Goodman W. and Goody C. what a comfortable Light had ye when this word was preached!) as having respect to a pronounced Sentence of Judgment; it is so, but what then? Pardon, says Mr. N, of all Sin must necessarily be included in a Sinner's free *Justification*. Right, a De-

a *Declarative*, but not an *Actual Pardon* which is reserv'd to the *last Day*, before which no Person is discharg'd: The free *Justification* we have here is only *Declarative* from God, but so as to give a *Right* to us, by vertue whereof we are assured, that God will not exercise his utmost Rigour, but shew all Favour and Kindness to those, who by belief of the *Gospel* do Repent and Obey. God doth now *Justify* the Sinner, as he assures him by the Death of Christ, he will not punish him upon his Repentance, but he fully remits both Sin and Sinner, when he delivers the Person upon the *Tryal* of the great *Day*, from all the Penalties which he hath deserved for his Sin. So that our compleat *Justification* and *Salvation* go both upon the same Terms. For, according to his *Mercy* he saved us by the washing of *Regeneration*, (i. e. *Baptism*) and renewing of the *Holy Ghost*, which he shed on us abundantly, through *Jesus Christ* our (i. e. all Christians) *Saviour.*

Mr. N. would have it to be founded upon *Absolute Grace* as unconditional to us sinners. Now how can that be? when the Apostle tells us, *Acts xiii. 38, 39.* Be it known unto you therefore, *Men and Brethren*, that through this *Man* is preached unto you the *forgiveness* of sins; and by him all that believe (here's the Condition) are justified from all things. Again, *Acts iii. 19.* *Repent ye therefore and be converted*; that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come, from the presence of the Lord. So

Tit. iii. 5, 6. now i say this not in derision, but in earnest

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Rom. ii. 13. For not the bearers of the Law are just before God, but the Doers of the Law shall be justify'd. Are not here Conditions Mr. N^o 3rd and we think this secures the Justice of God as a Judge. We are indeed justify'd by Absolved Grace as it signifies God's Kindness, Favour and Mercy: But the great Mistake lies here, that Men look upon this Grace, not as looking back only, but as looking forward to our whole Christian Conversation, as if it import-ed an Absolution from the Tētōr of the Co-venant of Grace, whereas it doth only justify us from the sin committed against the Co-venant of Works; it puts us in a Capacity of being pardoned which we were not before; but leaves us afterwards to be Absolved or Condemned, as we obey, perform or violate the Conditions of the new Covenant. Faith puts us in the Way, and if we live up to it, in the State of Salvation too; it gives us a present Right to Salvation. But it is by living by, and suitably to, this Faith that we receive the end thereof, which is the *Salvation* of our Souls. Grace imports here, God's Favour and kind Affection to us, and Men alive (obliged to work out their *Salvation* with fear and trem-blung) are not yet actually saved, but called to a State of Salvation by it. Now, tho' this Grace is not absolute in our Author's sense of it, but Conditional, we being justify'd by Faith, yet since that Faith is not of ourselves, but is the *Gift* of God, and that it is of meer Grace, that is Favour, that this Act of Faith which deserves nothing, is imputed to us for Righteousness, it is certain that we are justify'd by his *Grace*.

With this Key, an ordinary Reader may see through all the rest of the Mistakes of this Chapter, especially that grand Mistake of making the imputed *Judgment to Condemnation* to be of a larger extent than the imputed *Righteousness to Justification*. And says Mr. N. *Judgment came upon all to Condemnation*, according, as he adds, *to the Sentence of that broken Covenant*; Even so, says he, saith the Apostle, Rom. v. 18: *By the Righteousness of one unto Justification of Life*, according to a secret Covenant, as he calls it, ^b with Christ as Redeemer and second Adam. How Mr. N. will you smother the Words; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life. Look to it, is this Truth in a plain Dress, or in a Disguise? is not the all of the one side of the same extent with the all of the other side? if not, how could the Apostle say, verse 20: *But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound*? With what propriety can it be said, with respect to a few *Elect among Adam's Race*, that *Grace did much more abound*? This were to make the Apostle contradict himself and speak scarce good Sense; Mr. N. if this is not warping I know not what it is to warp. Take the word *Elect*, as it undoubtedly imports, for all Christians; and the Text clears up again and is restored to itself; but with Mr. N's *Comment* it is stark-staring Nonsense, and here I take my leave of all the rest of this Chapter.

^b If it be secret, how came he into the Secret?

C H A P. IX.

Of SANCTIFICATION consider'd.

HAVING taken a formal Leave of the last Chapter, and not willing to visit it again till called upon, I think fit here to acquaint the Reader with what I forgot to observe then, to wit, that Time and greater Advantages of Information, have convinced Men, that St. Paul speaks of *Works* preceding *Faith*, and St. James of those *Works* that follow *Faith*, they being of Necessity in order to a continuance in a State of *Justification*, and Freedom from our final Condemnation. This being premised, I want to know in what Sense Mr. N. can be said to be *sanctified* or *set apart to holy Uses, or dedicated unto holy Orders in the Worship or Service of God*, who never was *sanc-*
tified, set apart, nor dedicated unto Holy Orders, by any Lawful Authority. Can a Club of Mechanicks, or of any Lay-men do this? Shew me Scripture for it if you can, Mr. N. I am sure you cannot. Consider better of it, and abhor the sacrilegious Usurpation. I am as certain, says the Learned Bishop Stillingfleet, that Christ never gave the People such an unalterable Right of choosing their own Ministers; as I am, says he, that Christ designed to have the Peace and Unity of the Church preserved.

* Unreasonableness of Separation. pag 331.

SAND

And

And if they have no unalterable Right to chuse Men for, I am sure they have none to confer, Holy Orders.

But to let this pass, how comes Mr. N. to say, that to sanctify, is to infuse Principles of positive Holiness into Man; and that God sets apart them he makes Godly unto himself, Psalm iv. 3. Since there is not a word of God's making them Godly, in all this Psalm. The words are, *The Lord hath set apart him that is (not he makes) godly for himself.* To say a Man's being elected is an essential part of Holiness, is in other words to say, *That if a Man, not elected, attains to the same Virtue and Piety, which is in one of the Elect, it is not Holiness in the former, though 'tis so in the latter.* Now, says the Learned Mr. Stebbing; ^d " This placing Holiness, in part at least, not upon the inherent Qualifications of Men, but in the Decree of God, concerning their future Condition, is just as good Sense, as if in the Definition of the nature of Loyalty, you should include the Favour of the Prince, and say, that if a Subject be never so faithful in his Service, and zealous for his Honour, yet he is not Loyal unless he has the Assurance of a Post of Ten Thousand Pounds a Year.

What the Assemblies Catechism, * calls renewed in the whole Man after the Image of God;

^d Polemical Tract of Gospel Holiness. page 60.
New Quest. 35.

to be seen on several words
say and the staves of both two Mr.

Mr. N. turns it to the *Will of God*, and quotes the same Text they quote for it, 2 Thes. iii. 13. The *Sanctification* mentioned here, refers to the Miraculous Effusions of the Holy Ghost, that attended the Apostle's Preaching, and prevailed on many to embrace it as the Word of God, which are now ceased; and by these, *God had from the beginning (of St. Paul's preaching) chosen those Thessalonians to Salvation* (i. e. to a capacity of being saved). For the Apostle doth not here speak of any *absolute Election* of the whole Church of the Thessalonians to eternal Life, because he could have no certain Knowledge of it*, or if he had, he could not have been under any just grounds of Fear, as we find he was, *lest by some means the Tempter should have tempted them, and his labour be in vain among them*, 1 Thes. iii. 5. St. Paul did not, as some now-a-days, think those Elect so secure from falling, as that his Labour could not be in *vain* among them. But Mr. N. makes *Sanctification* to consist of certain Qualities put into the Soul all at once by an Almighty Operation; the *Assembly* calls it a *work of God's free Grace*. But as the Ingenious Mr. Stebbing, very well observes, "Seeing the Scripture commandeth us to be *Holy*, this would be a strange sort of Precept, if *Holiness* were something which is infus'd into us by an Almighty Operation of the *Spirit*." And some are so fond of *Grace* and *Godliness*, under this *Idea*, that they think they have no need of *Vertue*. But, tho' our Saviour died to *expiate our Sins*, yet (God

* See *Whitby's Annot.*

knows) he never intended to supply our Duties. Purifying their hearts by Faith +, imports, that the Gentiles were also made a pure People by the Faith of the Gospel, and conferring on them the miraculous Gift of the Holy Ghost, even as God did to the believing Jews.

I know of none but Deists, who think Civility and Morality sufficient, and such, with some others, are for no Forms of Religion, nor for any Revelation, in which they disagree even with Dissenters, and all Christians. And yet 'tis certain, that all the Duties of Religion (even the Credenda) are either Instances or Instruments of Moral Goodness, and I will let this Author into a Secret, that Grace and Virtue, in one Sense, is one and the same thing, and that the Gospel is the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, Tit. ii. 11. that the whole Duty of Man consists in being Virtuous; and all that is enjoyn'd him beside, is in order to it, and attended with such Credentials, as may satisfy the most obstinate Infidel, that they are not contrary to Reason. St. Paul did not discourse to Felix of the workings of the Spirit, of Regeneration, &c. but of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, and it were more for the eternal Welfare of Souls, if there were more practical and less speculative Points preached up; for when Men have set aside all manner of Virtue, let them tell me (says one) what remains to be called Grace.

+ Acts xv. 9.

God, says our Author, may leave his own Children when they leave him, as he did Francis Spira. What! finally to perish, as he did by Despair? I thought there was no fear of that by our Author's Doctrine. I will give Mr. N. an Instance nearer Home, of that Son of Perdition, Major Weir, who was up to the Ears in our Author's Doctrine, and pray'd all that came near him into Raptures; which they, and others, mistook for the Influences of the Holy Ghost, 'till the Wretch was found out and burnt. And now Mr. N. is it not very dismal when the Doctrine of God's Rich Grace is thus abused? neither can I see how you can get rid of your own Objection, that the Holy Spirit grieves, mourns, and weeps for Sin; and I wonder to hear you say, That the Spirit works all Grace in us, and yet that it is inconsistent he should so operate in a rational Soul; for if the having certain Qualities infused, or put into the Soul by an irresistible Power, be essential to Sanctification or Holiness, it will be hard to offer, says Mr. Stebbing, a good Reason to any Man that has a mind to be excused, why he should endeavour to be Holy.

C H A P.

¶ ~~W~~isdom and knowledge of F. are to be known
 in substance and in quality and in the
 true sense of the word knowledge among
 themselves here and now. And it is noted that
 such is the nature of the world that it is
 best known who is wise, and now
C H A P. X.
Of GLORIFICATION
Considered.

IN this Chapter, Mr. N. represents Things not in a true, but in such a Light as will best suit his own Scheme, asserting, that Adam was set up as Lord of the World, to pre-figure him that was to come in human Nature, the great Lord of Glory himself. But how does he prove that he was set up for this end? This is a plain begging of the Question, and never can be proved; and therefore Mr. N. was wise enough to pass it over, without attempting to prove it. God's Elect, says our Author, was chosen in him (i. e. Christ) as bead. They were so, but not in his restricted Sense of the word *Elect*. Take it as it ought to be taken, for all Christians, and it declares God's abundant Love, sets forth Christ's diffusive Charity to the whole Race of Mankind; all upon Creation-bottom, as he calls it, that believe in Christ, were intended for, and put in a capacity of obtaining, an higher Glory, and such a state of Life, Glory, and Immortality, as should be above all possibility of becoming mortal any more.

Mr. N. speaking of the words, raised in Power, adds, some of the Fathers have thought (themselves) able to move the Globe of the World with their Foot; but that, says he, I

M know

know not yet. The good Man has ventur'd out of his depth here. For *Archimedes*, an ingenious *Heathen*, who lived above 200 Years before *Christ* was born, and consequently much longer before any Christian Father was born; was the only *Father* who said, *Δος με τὸν κόσμον. i. e. Let me have but a place to stand on, and I will turn the World which way I please.* But tho' this Observation may do our Author great Honour amongst his *Men of mean Capacities*, I can't see of what Service it can be to his *Cause*.

Nor can I conceive how *Psal. xlvi. 9.* can be a proof, that *the Saints being first absolved, for the greater Solemnity of this Assize, shall sit in all their Glory-Robes at the King of Glory's Right hand, shining as in Gold of Ophir.* Nor how it comes that *Believers have an indefeasible Right and Title settled upon them by Grace here*; seeing *Perseverance to the end, and being faithful unto Death**; are by our Lord himself made the Conditions of Salvation, and of receiving from his hands *the Crown of Life*; nor do I rightly apprehend Mr. N's meaning, when he speaks of the *Admiration* of those, *who, he says, are saved by Sovereign Grace, thro' the blood of the Lamb.* Sovereign Grace, I take to be *Favour, Mercy, and Goodness* in a *Sovereign*, who confers something beneficial upon us *freely, and without any Obligation*; and that it doth not diminish from the *Absoluteness* of the *Sovereignty*, or from the *Efficacy* of the *Grace of God*, to believe that it doth not influence Christians with such an *efficacy*

* *Rev. iii. 20.*

as cannot be resisted; because if it did, this would entirely destroy the Morality of every Act, and take away the whole Nature of Virtue and Vice, and render the *Affize* at the Great Day altogether useless, or unjust; yea, directly opposite to the *Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God* †, who will render to every Man according to his Deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace to every Man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

And with this I conclude my Remarks upon Mr. N's Performance; the most material Passages of which, I think, I have sufficiently considered; and do now submit it to the Consideration of every impartial and unbiass'd Reader, having no Favour to ask of those, who have but one Answer to all Arguments that don't please them; to wit, that it is *carnal Reason* with which they secure themselves against the Attacks of all that can be said, to undeceive them. If any one thinks fit to take the same Freedom with my Remarks, that I have done with Mr. N's Book, let him write consistently, and with Christian Decency, and he may

† Rom. ii. 5, 6, 7, &c.

assuredly command my Attendance ; whose hand in writing against Mr. N, hath been guided by no other Consideration ; no other Motive, except that of Truth, and a hearty endeavour to undeceive some well meaning, but misguided, People.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

*A short View of the Judgment of two
Eminent Reformers and Martyrs,
Bishop HOOPER and Bishop LA-
TIME R, with regard to what
Mr. N. calls Foundation Points.*

AND first, that the Doctrine of *Absolute Decrees* was unknown to those Holy Martyrs, does evidently appear, from the Preface to a Book, written by John Hooper, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, containing *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments, and publish'd Anno 1550. Viz.* " That Cain was " no more excluded from the Promise of " Christ, till he excluded himself, than " Abel; Saul, than David; Judas than " Peter; Esau, than Jacob: That the threatenings of God against Esau (if he had not " of his willful Malice excluded himself " from the Promise of Grace) should no " more have hindred his Salvation, than God's " threatenings against Nineveh, &c. That it is " not a Christian Man's part to say, that " God hath written fatal Laws, as the Stoick; " and with necessity of Destiny, violently " pulleth

“ pulleth the one by the hair into *Heaven*,
 “ and thrusteth the other head-long into Hell ;
 “ that the Cause of Rejection, or Damnation,
 “ is sin in Man, (*N. B.* Mr. *N.* resolves
 “ it into an *Act of God's Sovereign Will*)
 “ which will not hear, neither receive the
 “ Promise of the *Gospel*.”

Bishop *Latimer*, in a Sermon on the third Sunday after *Epiphany*, speaketh thus, *viz.*
 “ For if they must be damned, the Fault is
 “ not in God but in themselves, for it is
 “ written, *God would have all Men should be*
 “ *saved*; but they themselves procure their
 “ own damnation, and despise the *Passion* of
 “ Christ, by their own wicked and inordinate
 “ living”. And again, in his 4th Sermon,
 preached in *Lincolnshire*, — “ That Christ
 “ shed as much blood for *Judas*, as for *Peter*;
 “ that *Peter* believed it and therefore was
 “ saved; that *Judas* would not believe,
 “ therefore was condemned; the fault being
 “ in him only, and no body else.”

Secondly, They did firmly believe, that true Believers may fall away and perish at last.
 “ The Cause of Rejection, or Damnation,
 “ (saith Bishop *Hooper*, in the above quoted
 “ Preface) is Sin in Man, which *will not bear*,
 “ neither receive the Promise of the *Gospel*;
 “ or else after he hath received it, by ac-
 “ customed doing of ill, *falleth* either into
 “ a contempt of the *Gospel*, and will not
 “ study to live there-after; or else hateth the
 “ *Gospel*, because it condemneth his ungod-
 “ ly Life.” And we find Bishop *Latimer*
 discoursing thus, in his eight Sermon in *Lin-
 colnshire*. “ Those Persons (saith he) that be
 “ not come yet to Christ, or if they were
 “ come

" come to Christ, be fallen again from him,
 " and so lost their *Justification*; (as there be
 " many of us when we fall willingly into
 " Sin against Conscience) we lose the favour
 " of God, our *Salvation*, and finally the *Holy*
 " *Ghost.*" And before (Cb. 6.) thus, " but
 " you will say (saith he) How shall I know
 " that I am in the *Book of Life*? How shall
 " I try my self to be the *Elect* of God to
 " everlasting Life? I answer first, we may
 " know that we may be one time in the
 " *Book*, and another time *come out again*, as
 " it appeareth by *David*, who was written
 " in the *Book of Life*; but when he sinned,
 " he at that time was out of the *Book* of the
 " favour of God, until he repented, and was
 " sorry for his Faults: So that we may be
 " in the *Book* one time, and afterwards,
 " when we forget God and his word, and do
 " wickedly, we come out of the *Book*, that
 " is, out of Christ, who is the *Book*." Add
 to this; that Bishop *Ridley*, that most emi-
 nent Martyr, who, 'tis probable, had a great
 hand in drawing up the *Articles* of the Church
 of *England*, and who was the ablest of all
 that advanced the Reformation, both for
 Piety, Learning, and Solidity of Judgment,
 was of the same Judgment with Bishop *Hooper*
 in the substantial Points of Religion, as
 appears from a Letter of his to Bishop *Hooper*,
 when in Prison *. And Archbishop *Cranmer*
 was of the same Judgment with Bishop
Ridley †.

* *Acts and Monuments*, in *Edward VI.* Fol. 1365.

† *Ibid.* Fol. 1702.

By

By this it may easily appear, how little Reason Mr. N. had to say, and by those Articles and the worthy Labours of the Reformers, in their Writings yet extant, the Church of England may see, if she please, whereabouts she now standeth. And now to requite Mr. N's. kindness, I will close this Appendix, by shewing the Reader whereabouts He, and those of his Principles, Stand ; and that from an excellent Performance*, well worthy to be perused by all conscientious and well-meaning Dissenters.

The first Doctrine (says my Author) upon which they build their Foundation, and by which they establish a perpetual Empire over all those who come to be of their Perswasion, and which is of the most universal use to them, is the Doctrine of absolute and irrespective Decrees of Predestination, about Election and Reprobation.— For, having first laid down, as a Positive, Infallible and Fundamental Truth, that God from all Eternity, did Elect a determinate Number to Salvation, and that this Number is but small.— The next thing they have to do, is, to assure them, who are their Disciples, that they are of this happy Number.— Now the first step to this Assurance, is, to use the Means; for Faith comes by hearing the word of God; tho' (says he) if this Doctrine of unconditional Decrees be pursued to the uttermost, those means must be either unnecessary, or nonsense, by being the decreed Conditions of an unconditional Decree.

“ But they are too wary to rest here.— “ Therefore before any one can be assured

* The Countermine, chap. viii, and ix.

that

" that he is of the *Elect*, tho' never so diligent a Hearer, that will not do, unless he be able to give an account of the exact time of his Conversion, when it was that he was called of God, and to God. The Signs of this Calling are Contrition, Compunction, or a trouble of Mind, arising from a sight of their lost Condition, as they phrase it; and they who are able to inform them of the time of this Call, at such a Sermon, or such a Night after my first Sleep, (tho' they did but dream so) it is enough. The Lord was pleased to call me; all those who can do this, are pronounced, from the Infallible Chair, to be in a certain State of Election the Children and People of God, and after a time of Probation, (which were needless, since they cannot fall away) they are solemnly initiated into their Church, and enter into a Promise never to return back again to the Tents of the ungodly, which (says he) might as well be spared if the rest of their Doctrine be true. Now their great and infallible sign of Election, being a knowledge of the time of their Conversion, accompanied with Compunction and Contrition, a Sense of Sin, and Sorrow for it; it is almost impossible for any Person, one time or another, not to have experienced all this, especially if they ever met, or been acquainted, with Sickness, Danger, or any remarkable afflictive Accidents; Sin will at one time or other appear, not only with its frightful ugliness,

" ness, but with the frightful Attendants of
" Death, Judgment and Eternity.

" But after all these Agonies of Spirit,
" which they make certain Indications of
" the new Birth.—Nay, after open Con-
" fession, and publick Repentance, the Per-
" son may be still in a state Reprobation.
" Judas he repented ; nay, his Contrition
" and Conviction, his Sense, Sight and Sorrow
" for his Sin, was so great and strong, that
" he publickly confess he had sinned in be-
" traying the Innocent Blood.—But for
" all these Marks, says he, I believe they
" they will not take him to be one of their
" number, who shall be saved ; and yet his
" Title to it, by all their Symptoms, is as fair
" as any they can make. But besides him,
" I doubt not (says he) there are thousands —
" have had strong Convictions, and horrible
" Agonies of Mind, from the frightful Ap-
" prehensions of Hell and Damnation.—
" Nay, I do not question, but they may
" have seriously repented,—and made some
" Attempts towards Amendment and Refor-
" mation in their Lives ; who nevertheless,
" as St. Peter says, * after they have escaped
" the Pollutions of this World, through the
" knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, after
" they have known the way of Righteousness,
" and tasted of the Powers of the World to
" come, have returned with the Dog to his vo-
" mit again,—which Place will in a moment
" blow up this curious train of Imaginations ;
" that Repentance and Contrition are infallible

* 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.

" Marks

" Marks of *Election*; or that there is an im-
" possibility of final falling away from the
" Happy State of Grace.

" Tho' in this Assurance of their being
" the chosen and *Elect* of God, they possess
" the greatest inward Peace and Tranquillity
" imaginable — Yet, hereby, poor Souls!
" (to use their own word) they are in the great-
" est Danger of destroying themselves and
" missing eternal Salvation; to which cer-
" tainly nothing can contribute more than an
" unwarranted Confidence and groundless Security.

Consilia Separationis (*says St. Augustin against Parmenian*) *inania sunt & periculosa, & plus perturbant infirmos bonos, quam corrigan animoso malos.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

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3	24	for <i>Saul</i>	so <i>Saul</i>
4	7	Council	Counsel
18	3	the Jewes	as Jews
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57 chap. iv.	2		no convincing Scripture
73	9	doth not	doth now
75	21	much	much more

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